

TAKE “NO” AS A STARTER: THE LIFE OF RICHARD L. GRAVES

Interviewee: Richard L. Graves

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Description

Richard “Dick” Graves was born in Boise, Idaho, on August 23, 1912. An astute businessman, he spent nearly twenty years in the gaming industry in Idaho. When that state banned gambling in 1953, he came to Nevada in 1954 to start over. Though many people considered Sparks and Carson City to be unlikely places for gaming enterprises to succeed, Graves operated lucrative establishments in Reno, Carson City, Yerington, and Sparks. His determination to provide his customers with the best in service and food paid off. His impact on the local economies of Carson City and Sparks was immediate, and they were no longer seen as mere passageways to Reno.

Graves was famous for his promotional gimmicks. Shortly after opening the Sparks Nugget, he came up with the idea of hiring a flagpole sitter. So “Happy” Bill Howard abandoned his flagpole-sitting job in Hermosa Beach, California, to accept the six-month job. Also popular was Bertha the Elephant, which Graves purchased in 1961. Along with her “Big Bertha” slot machine, she drew thousands of visitors to the Nugget over the years.

Perhaps Graves’s most effective promotion involved his famous Golden Rooster, a specially designed eighteen-carat, fifteen-pound rooster. Though the gold was approved by the U.S. Mint, Treasury officials later confiscated the rooster. A legal battle ensued and lasted over two years, but the publicity from the case led droves of people to the Nugget. Graves finally won his rooster back.

In 1960, Dick Graves sold his stock in the Sparks Nugget to John Ascuaga, though he continued to assist in its operation. An air enthusiast—and owner of several aircraft—he yearned to travel. And travel he did—through Europe, the subcontinent, Asia, Africa, and the United States. In his oral history he describes these travels in great detail.

Unassuming to the point of shyness, Dick Graves would rather observe than be seen, inquire rather than proclaim. Here is a man of extraordinary interests and achievements.

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An Oral History Conducted by J. Francis Brown IV

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber
Director, UNOHP
July 2012

INTRODUCTION

“Take ‘No’ as a Starter” is the philosophy of Dick Graves.

After losing nearly a lifetime of work and investment in Idaho when that state banned gaming, he came to Nevada and started over in what some considered unlikely places—Carson City and Sparks. He gambled that the best in food and services was due his customers. He gambled that to bring in players one must send out winners in ever-increasing numbers.

His impact on the local economies of those two cities was immediate. Carson City and Sparks no longer became just places to travel through to reach Reno.

Then at the full flood of his achievements in gaming and restaurateuring, he retired to devote himself to what he always yearned to do—travel.

Unassuming to the point of shyness, Dick Graves would rather observe than be seen, inquire rather than proclaim. Here then is a man of extraordinary interests and achievements.

When invited to participate in the Oral History Project, Richard Graves accepted readily. He was an enthusiastic chronicler of his life’s work and observations through eighteen taping sessions, all held either at his home in Carson City or Lake Tahoe between July, 1978 and November, 1978.

The Oral History Project of the University of Nevada Reno Library preserves the past and the present for future research by recording the reminiscences of persons who have figured prominently in the development of Nevada and the West. Scripts resulting from the interviews are deposited in the Special Collections departments of the University Libraries at Reno and Las Vegas. Mr. Graves has generously assigned his literary rights in the oral history to the University of Nevada-Reno, and has designated his scripts as open for research.

J. Francis Brown, IV
University of Nevada-Reno
1980

THE GAMING YEARS

J. Francis Brown IV: Welcome to the Oral History Project of the University of Nevada, Mr. Graves. We have a time capsule to fill and it has your name on it. Let's get on the time machine and go back and begin filling it with your life and times. In order to start though, let's fill it in reverse order and take the most recent happening in your life, the trip down the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Tell me about that adventure.

Richard L. Graves: Yes, I think that would be a great idea. But first I'd like to say that I'm happy to be getting this down on tape. It's something that I should have done for my own family a long time ago. I never would have unless the University of Nevada had come along with the idea of doing it.

Starting with the Middle Fork trip—it's great because my life has been filled with trips and adventure and unusual things that have gone on through all the years. Mmmm, this particular trip was a delightful one and was made with part of my family. We just returned two days ago from this trip. The people that

went with me: my oldest daughter and her husband, Mary Kay and George Fry, and their two children, Christian (age eleven) and Matthew (age nine), and, Mike Savini who is fifteen and the son of Flora's niece, Mrs. Sam Savini, and Bob Tillotson, an old and very good friend of mine from Boise. I'll tell more about Bob later on.

We left on the sixteenth of July, flying from Reno to San Francisco and met the Frys there. [We] met the Frys in San Francisco and continued on to Boise where we stayed overnight. We left early the next morning using two Cessna 206s to fly into Indian Creek on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. These particular planes fly at a hundred and twenty miles an hour. They're used by people in the back country because they can carry a big load, and get in and out of short fields. The flight in was beautiful, especially that time in the morning when the air is smooth. It was uneventful except that there were some beautiful sights. The ride up the landing field took us where the boats were waiting for

us—the rubber rafts. Hmmm, these particular rubber rafts that the Mackay Bar people use, were made in England, and are specifically designed for white water work, very durable boats and very well constructed. So we loaded all our gear into the heavy neoprene bags. These large bags are fixed in such a manner so they are waterproof.

The boats were loaded with all our food and ice to help keep the meat and drinks cold. We started down—a typical day on the river is leaving Indian Creek probably at 9:30 or ten o'clock, and you're on the river till 12:30 or one o'clock. We stop for lunch, which is a very simple lunch of sandwiches made up of sandwich meats, peanut butter and jelly. Hmmm, one of the boys was slicing up an onion and it looked so good I put it right in my peanut butter and jelly sandwich and everybody thought that was ridiculous, but it was—it was—[chuckling]—it sounds terrible, but it wasn't bad. So we had a light lunch and then continued on the water until three or four o'clock in the afternoon. You can fish the Middle Fork, but you must use barbless hooks and the fish have to be returned to the water. Believe me, they're taken off very carefully. You wet your hands before taking hold of the fish to take it off the hook, so you don't remove any of the scale on the fish.

They did a lot of fishing and caught quite a few, and sadly had to throw them all back. However, this is a great thing because there are so many boats on the river now they would completely deplete the trout. I'm satisfied from some observation during the trip that not everyone throws all the fish back. But I do think a great many of the people do. In the late afternoon, say three or four o'clock, you'd find or I should say, you come to assigned camping places where you'd unload the boat and get your sleeping bag rolled out while the men who're running the boats would get

things ready for dinner. And they'd put out some excellent meals. The first night we had fried chicken. The second night— what did we have the second night? Forget. One night we had steak. The second night we had a Mexican dinner. They cooked in dutch ovens. The new regulations in the primitive areas of Idaho [are] the fires have to be built in a fire pan. It's about two feet long and eighteen inches wide with a lip on it that comes up about three inches. A grill fits over this pan. The idea of this pan is so the ashes don't get around on the ground, and when you get ready to break camp, water is poured on the ashes and the remaining residue is put in a big plastic bag and put back on the boat. Everything that goes in has to come out. You leave the camp so that it looks like nobody has been there in ten years. All the camps we went into on this trip were in this condition when we arrived. And we certainly left them in the same condition when we left.

On the whole trip, which lasted five days, I would guess, we, mmm, went over twenty-five or thirty named rapids. Plus, probably a hundred unnamed rapids. We'd get soakin' wet many, many times a day. There were never any particular dangerous times. I myself was preaching all the time to the children to be sure to wear their life jackets and not walk around the boat when we were close or goin' into rapids. I was moving one time from the front part of the boat to the back to do some fishing and slipped off a steel frame, my left foot was on the steel frame and slipped off it and went into a cross tube in the boat which was supposed to be inflated. Unfortunately, it wasn't. And, of course, in slipping off I dropped probably sixteen, eighteen inches. This threw me off to the left and the boatman grabbed my right arm. It felt like a vise took hold of it. He was so strong and, well, saved me from getting a good dunking. [Laughs]

So I was doing all the preaching about being careful and I was the one that almost fell in.

I notice you have a bruise on your left leg. Did that result from your slip? [Mr. Graves was wearing walking shorts during this session.]

Very easily could have—I don't know. [Laughing] So it was a delightful trip in every way. It was safe and we all had lotsa fun, and it's something the family will remember forever and talk about for a long time, I hope. Certainly, I enjoyed being with them. And I'm sure they enjoyed it.

The Mackay Bar Company you spoke of, who owns it and for how many years?

I'd say about eight or ten years. They bought this ranch from a man by the name of Al Tyce who had built up the Mackay Bar Ranch. I think they bought it about eight, nine, ten years ago. It's owned by a man named Hansberger who used to be president of Boise Cascade Company.

How many raft trips have you made in the past?

Oh, while I was still living in Idaho, I made two trips down the Middle Fork of the Salmon. And then in about 1957 or '58, after moving to Nevada, I made a trip with Frank Green, who was the architect who did all my work in Nevada, and Paul Laxalt, who at that time was my attorney. We had a super trip. The great thing about that trip was that it was very adventurous yet it was an easy trip. I mean, you're not killing yourself, and there was something new going on all the time—some new rapids. Of course, in those days you could keep the fish and we ate most of the fish. But now in this short span of time you can't keep the fish. I suppose in a matter

of a few years they won't allow any fishing on the river at all. Even throwing them back. It's my guess that will have to happen because, I think, a lot of people are keeping their catch.

Mr. Laxalt was not Governor, he was not a U.S. Senator, of course. What political office did he hold at that time?

I don't think he held any particular political office. He had been district attorney for a short period of time.

You mentioned the other day he was reading a book. Tell me about that.

Oh, he was reading a book called, *Small Town D.A.* And after we got back I made a montage of, of a series of photographs of Paul lying on the beach, or lying on the sleeping bag, or lying in the boat and all the time he had this, *Small Town D.A.* pocket book in his hands which was kinda comical.

In twenty years between those two trips, what change, or did you notice any change at all in the countryside, the river, the animal populations?

Well, the biggest change I noticed was the enormous number of boats making the trip. When we made it we didn't see hardly anybody. Maybe we'd see one or two other boats. This year we saw lotsa boats. Well, it's regulated by the State of Idaho. They decide how many people can go down. understand that last year there were about six thousand people who made the Middle Fork trip. This is just what one of the boatmen told me, now whether this is right or not, I don't know. That seems like quite a few. They're going to have to really control it to keep it from, from getting out of line.

Of the two rivers in Idaho, the Snake and the Salmon, which presents the most challenge for the adventurer?

I don't think the Snake presents any challenge. I don't believe they do much running of it. Maybe small portions. But the Middle Fork and the main Salmon, well, they're the two main places. The Middle Fork is probably the best known.

Do you suppose that the Snake has been dammed and might be the reason for this? Many blame the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

I would think so. I don't really know for sure, Frank.

Was the Corps of Engineers planning anything for the Salmon?

No, I don't think there are any plans for the Middle Fork of the Salmon. In fact, the Fish and Game Department have bought up many ranches on the Middle Fork, and I understand, they will buy any ranch privately owned at this time and pay way more for it than anybody else could just to put it back into a wilderness state.

Are you speaking of the Wild Rivers Act under the U.S. Department of the Interior?

No, it's under the Department of Fish and Game.

The State of Idaho?

No, the Federal Fish and Game. I don't completely agree to buying up all those ranches. I don't think that's quite right. I think probably it's going on the right track, but I don't think they should be picking up all of

them. You still need people like the Mackay Bar people to have a concession in there. To have a ranch so people can go into the area. Listen, the government isn't going to set up accommodations for people to enjoy the back country. That back country is no good unless you can go in and enjoy it.

Now that we're warmed up, let's get on that time machine and go back to the very beginning. To August 23, 1912, the date you were born. And before that. Tell me about your mother and father.

Well, my father was Ernest L. Graves and he was born in Buffalo, New York, February 23, 1886. His parents were Samuel Leroy Graves and Nellie Lucinda Crouch. They were married November 26, 1873. The family moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1905. And Dad moved to Boise in February of 1907. My mother was named Lucy O'Brien, and was born October 25, 1884. And they were married on November 18, 1909. Her father was Dennis O'Brien and her mother, Ella Flannigan. And well, they were from Gainsville, Ohio. Unfortunately, I don't have much information I can turn to about my grandmother's family. But Dad worked in a store called Sellers in Boise, Idaho, which specialized in housewares, chinaware, crystal.

And then at some period he went in with a man named John Jensen and started a stationery, office supply store called Jensen-Graves Company. Oddly enough this store is still existing in Boise today. And the young man Dad sold it to has now sold to his sons. Yet, they have still retained the name, Jensen-Graves. In fact, I drove by it the other day when I was in Boise.

Still selling the sane type of merchandise?

Yes. I went to Saint Joseph's grade school. In the early years of high school I helped in the store. And, I, for some reason, it just didn't, ah, suit me and I never wanted to follow Dad at all. He was kinda put out because I didn't. And I just didn't have any desire to stay in the store. We lived in my father's original house. It was built at Twenty-eighth and Madison Streets in, let's see; I don't remember quite what year, but they decided to move the house to Nineteenth and Jefferson. This was somewhat closer to town. My father rode a bicycle back and forth to work. Coming home to lunch each day. All those years! At some period he, he decided to buy a car and he said he wouldn't buy the car until he had the cash and he bought a Dodge. I don't remember the year. But this was a great thing in our lives at that time to be owning a car. My father was extremely frugal, so was my mother, and it taught me to be the same way, to know the value of a dollar. I feel it was through their efforts that I was able to acquire what I have through the years. They were extremely saving in every possible way they could—never to the point of depriving us of anything, but living very carefully. I see today so many families living in just the opposite way and I often think back to my parents and the way they lived.

During high school I delivered the morning newspaper on my bicycle. I had to go clear downtown to get the papers at three o'clock in the morning. I also started three furnaces for older widows. This was in the day before automatic furnaces of any type. I'd go in and get the fire started and stoke it with coal so the house would be warm when they got up. Well, by the time I got out of high school, or graduated from high school, I was route manager for the Statesman. And after that [I] came to work in the office and collection department. At that time the boys who delivered the papers did so for a wage.

They didn't do the collection, collectors went out and collected for the paper. It was during high school I bought my first car—an Austin. I'd give anything in the world if I still had it today. Unfortunately, I don't.

An English car?

No, a little American-made car, I think. A very small car and everyone used to laugh at me getting out of the car because I was so tall. It was built very low to the ground. I don't even remember what I paid for it. But it wasn't very much. In high school I was, well, all through school, I was an average student. In grade school I got a pin for being best in algebra. However, I don't think I could work the simplest problem in algebra today. I was not active in sports at all. I went, attended a lot of games and all that, but I never got active myself. I took manual training which has been of great value to me all my life because I like to work with my hands. This was another thing I learned from my father was repairing things around the house. Keeping things up around the house. I followed this all through my life. Anything that needs fixing, I fix it. Well, if I can't do it, I have it done. Most of the time I do it myself. This not only saves a lot of money, but it gives a lot of self-satisfaction in being able to do that. I know some people who can't—couldn't do anything in that respect. And I often wonder how they really get along. My father had a little workshop in the basement. And this was a big thing with him to repair and to fix anything that needed fixing and make it last as long as it could. Was never anything that was ever thrown out.

Do you have any of your father's old tools?

Yes, I do. I have a few of his tools and some things he gave me after we were married. In

fact, one little box, small set of trays that is divided into sections containing all different sizes of tacks and nails, and after I use it I naturally think of him.

Describe some of those other tools.

Well, I have a chisel, I have a hand saw, quite a few things that were in his workshop. This workshop was not elaborate by any sense of the imagination. It was a simple workshop, just a little place where he could fix and repair things. He constantly did this sort of thing.

Did he build furniture of the quality you build today?

No, no. He didn't do anything like that, but he just enjoyed, in fact, through necessity, he went ahead and fixed things rather than let them run down or hire an outsider.

I don't know whether this would have been third, probably the third year of high school, I had a friend that I used to run around with—quite a bit with. He was my age and his father had, had slot machines. For one reason or another these fascinated me and while my friend had no use for them at all, I was anxious to try to get into the slot machine business. It looked pretty good to me. And I found a location in a store which we, a bunch of us kids, used to hang around. It was just a little like a Seven-Eleven Store—a place of that type. And I knew the owner, and asked him if I could put a slot machine in. Well, slot machines were illegal, but they were tolerated in those days in a lot of places. So, I talked to the father of this boy and he said, "Yes." He'd let me have one. So we put the machine an. He kept the keys. I didn't have the keys and he went away for a few days, and when he came back the machine wasn't working. But

the reason it wasn't working, it was so full of money it was plugged up. This was machine Number One. [Laughs]

Naturally, it looked extremely good to me. So this went, well, from that machine to another machine and into punch boards. And while I was still in high school, I was operating a few, mmm, a few punch boards and a few slot machines. After I got out of high school I was still, of course, working at the *Statesman*, in the office and in the collection department. But I was gradually putting out more and more machines. About this time, I built my own pinball machine. This was when pinballs first came in. Did this in the basement of my folks' house. [I] built it out of mahogany, and, put it in Tillotson's Sporting Goods store. operated it with the sporting goods store and it made money for quite a few years. Unfortunately, I lost this machine somewhere along the line.

Speaking of Bob Tillotson, I neglected in discussing the Middle Fork (Salmon River) to say that Bob went along with us. Bob has been a very ardent fisherman all his life and a hunter. I asked him to go along and join us on this trip because he knows the back country well. And he's been a very good and loyal friend all these years, and we thoroughly enjoyed him because he's a great deal of fun. And he was extremely nice to my grandsons, and to Mike Savini; patient with them in trying to show them just how to fish.

During the last years of high school I designed and built a number of pieces of furniture and then would write an article for *Popular Science* or *Popular Mechanics* magazines, and had quite a few articles accepted. And [I] was paid for these. Well, this was a very interesting thing for me, and one day I got a letter from the Delta Power Tool

Company offering to send me a catalogue and offering to give me anything I wished to select from the catalogue with the provision that I would use the power tools and that any pictures that I submitted in future articles to the magazines show the tools. Well, my dad said this just had to be a gimmick of some kind. "There's no way they're going to give you those power tools because they were so expensive. So anyway, I went ahead and ordered a lathe, a jig saw, a table saw and a planer. And the only mistake I made was that I didn't order more because they shipped them all out to me, freight prepaid, and I still have this set of tools. It's in Boise right now, but I'm going to bring 'em down to Nevada.

How many articles did you write in return for the tools?

I don't really remember. I'd say four or five. I have ten in the magazines in Carson. I never heard from Delta again but they seemed to be happy with it. I was happy, I know that. [Laughs] And this was a big thing to be getting while still in high school. The tools (my brother used them for years in the Royal) —in the basement of the Royal. That [the Royal], I should say, was a restaurant which he had in Boise. And they were still there until just recently when the place was sold. And then they were held out so they could be shipped down here.

Mmmm, going back now to just after I got out of high school, I was, of course, still working for the *Statesman*. Still operating slot machines and pinballs around. And J. C. Adams, the manager of the *Statesman*, called me one day, and he'd just found out that I had these little side businesses. He told me I could go a long way with the newspaper, but I'd have to give up the slot machines. So, I told him

I'd think about it. Later I told him I felt I'd have to give up the newspaper career and go for the slot machines, which was, of course, a very wise move; it proved out to be a very wise move.

How large a circulation did the newspaper have at that time?

Gee, I don't know. Boise's about the same size as Reno, so I don't know really what it was then. The paper was owned by a woman, a Margaret Ailshie. A very fine newspaper—still in publication. So, I left the newspaper and continued in the pinball and slot machine business. That was along in 1931, '32, '33, '34. I had pinball machines in—and in Boise they'd legalized pinballs—and allowed what they called two master licenses. And I had one license and a company by the name of Gem State Novelty had the other master license. This was—that company was owned by a man from Washington, but was operated by a man named Harold Pepple. Well, since we had the two master licenses we got along very well together, and one of us never tried to take over the other's locations. We had, more or less, an understanding between ourselves so that there was no fighting between us. And consequently we enjoyed a very good relationship. Both of us made lots of money. They later on changed the law and made the pinballs illegal, at some period I just don't remember the time.

Shortly after I was out of high school, I had pneumonia. Sick in the hospital. This was before the antibiotics. And, so my Dad took care of collecting the money from the slot machines and punch boards. I always remember when I got out of the hospital, I was home recuperating and he had all the accounts down, and he said to me, "I don't know what

you're doin' with your money. I don't know if you're saving it, but you're making a helluva lot more money than I am and I hope you got enough sense to save it." I think, in those very words. Because he couldn't believe what this little dingbat business of mine was doing.

I neglected to say my mother worked in Sellers Store along with my Dad. And that's where he met her. As she was a Catholic—Dad was raised a Congregationalist—he decided to become a Catholic before they were married. He took instruction in the Church and, of course, was baptized and received communion and confirmation, and was a convert. His mother was so upset over this she sort of disowned him. I don't know whether in so many words, but she didn't communicate with him for many years. Later on in her latter years she'd come and visit us once or twice, and we visited her in Pasadena once. I should say, my father was probably a better Catholic than most Catholics who are born Catholic. He was very true to his religion. He knew it very well. He lived it explicitly and completely.

I had two brothers and one sister. My brother Edward Dennis was born November 27, 1914, making him two years younger than I am. My sister Ellen Marie, born May 3, 1917, and my brother, John Leo, was born October 6, 1922. My brother Edward and I were close in age and more or less grew up right together. He had an unfortunate thing happen to him at the age of fourteen. He developed diabetes. This was, well, a tough time in our family because my mother had to learn to give insulin shots. And his food had to be weighed by the grain and each meal figured for carbohydrate content because he had very severe diabetes. For him it was extremely tough during family gatherings. Christmas and holidays and Thanksgiving. He couldn't have the things we could. And

I'd seen him many times get up and leave the table and go to his bedroom. It was sad for all of us, but Dad made the decision that our meals would not be changed because of him. And it was a good decision because it taught him to watch out for himself. And he did. And he's controlled his diabetes all through his life very carefully. He still takes insulin three times a day.

A tragic thing happened to my sister. One day Ellen was sick with a stomach ache—sick for a couple or three days. Mother didn't have her go to bed during the day. She lay on the davenport in the living room with a hot water bottle. It developed that she had an acute appendicitis and the appendix burst and gangrene set in and she died June 16, 1931. This was a terrific tragedy for the family because she was the only daughter. And Mother blamed herself for her death because of using the hot water bottle. It was, well, a big burden on everyone. My mother went through an extremely tough time for quite a while. However, my dad decided the best thing he could do would be to adopt a girl. [He] did a lot of checking and adopted a girl named Cohen Murphy from Saint Helena, Oregon in September of 1931. she was thirteen at the time. So, she came into the family and, of course, mother had her to take care of and this sort of gradually got her over the death of Ellen. Incidentally, Collen went on to Saint Alphonsus Training School for Nurses and graduated in October, 1940. She was married to Nicky Zivanich and they had three children. She presently lives in Seattle, Washington. She became part of our family and was raised completely as a daughter.

My brother, younger brother, John—perhaps I'll read this from Dad's family book—what he wrote about regarding John's death. This is in his handwriting, his words: "John L. Graves received his appointment as

aviation cadet in the United States Air Force, and on March 15, 1942, went to Santa Ana, California, for training. He was graduated as a second lieutenant at the Army airfield, Pecos, Texas, with classification as pilot. After further training, he became airplane commander with a crew of nine on a B-24 bomber. August 23, 1944, incidentally, my birthday, his plane exploded from a fire starting in one engine. He was able by fast work and instant command to get five of his crew out before the explosion. He and the other four were instantly killed. John was buried with full military honors in Saint John's portion of Morris Hill Cemetery, Boise, Idaho. A set of the stations of the cross has been placed in Saint Mary's Church as a memorial to him and his loyalty."

The ink on this page is all blurred from—no doubt from Dad's tears as he wrote this. This was—John was just twenty-two at this time; he was a very handsome young man, had been a good student. This was another extreme blow to my mother and father. After all they had lost Ellen in 1931 and then to lose John. It was a real tragedy, I can tell you for sure. And [with a voice heavy with emotion] it took them many years to, to get over—if they ever did.

We'll get back into a little bit of, of my family life at home. I can't remember only on very rare occasions did we go out to eat anywhere. There was no McDonald's or Burger King in those days. Our Christmases, Thanksgivings, birthdays were always big, lovely family affairs with mother doing all the cooking. She was an excellent cook—an excellent baker. In fact, today for lunch we had chocolate cookies that were a recipe of hers. She was always baking cakes and pies constantly—all of this right in view of the fact my brother couldn't eat any of them.

Oh, we had, always had a dog. One little fox terrier, two fox terriers, they were small—

could come into the house. When I was a baby I remember seeing pictures of a large collie which they had at that time.

Another story, one story I was told was when I swallowed a—the whistle out of a baby toy. And my mother, of course, had no car. She didn't ride a bicycle. The only way she could get me to a doctor was to put me in a baby buggy and wheel me to the doctor's to get the whistle out of my throat. This, of course, I don't remember, but I remember being told about it.

My father was a great reader. He read stories to all of us every evening when we were young children. *The Burgess Bedtime Stories*, I remember very well. There was some other set of books, but I can't come up with the title now.

Circuses were always a big thing—particularly for me. They fascinated me—still do. Mmmm, it's a wonder I didn't join 'em. I was always there when they unloaded. I'd get down to the circus, ah, maybe two, three times when it was in town. I did some work in the circuses, as a flunky, you know, on and off just to get some free tickets.

What sort of thing did you do?

Oh, cleaning up and hauling seats around. Placing the seats. Taking down—tearing down the seats. Putting things up. This type of thing. Helping with the canvas. They were in large tents then.

Do you recall which circus came to town?

No, I don't remember the name just now. Of course, I think that circuses that came to Boise in those days were just small. Wouldn't have been any of the major circuses. Of course, there were carnivals that, you know—they always fascinated me.

How did the circus arrive in town?

On a train.

Where was the circus lot in Boise?

It would have been somewhere close to the railroad tracks with tents and everything. They weren't your big circuses. But they were big to us, I guess. Real big!

What circus act was your favorite?

I don't know which one I liked best. I just liked the circus. It still fascinates me. There still isn't a circus, a big major circus that I don't go to. I've seen circuses all over the world. Three, four times I've taken Mary Kay and George's boys to the circus, to Ringling Brothers. And as we go on you'll find we named a big showroom the "Circus Room"—one of the Nugget's. So circuses did have a fascination for me. Carnivals had a fascination for me.

We were close, a very close-knit family. It was a good family. We were taught the fundamentals of living, the right type of life—good morals. Of course, we got lots of training in the Catholic school we went to. But mainly we got that real down to earth training at home. My father was a strict disciplinarian. His word was law. When he said it he meant it. And we respected him. And it followed through and taught me a good deal all through my life. He, I said before how careful he was with his money, well, when he died I was amazed at how much money he had been able to save, which turned out to be enough to take care of mother until her death. It was an amazing thing to me because he never made big money. And how he was able to save this money was always sort of a mystery to me. It was all done through extremely careful

management. Every penny had a place to go. He never bought anything on credit—ever. When he bought his first car he had the money to pay for it. He wore a truss for years rather than have an operation because he couldn't afford the operation. When he got enough to have the operation he had it and paid cash for it. He knew exactly what it was going to cost before he had it. Today we go have it and worry about paying for it later. That's sort of the difference in people today.

How long a workday did your father put in at the stationery store?

Not particularly long. No. Eight, nine hours, I'd say. Maybe ten hours.

Did they have evening shopping hours then?

No, stores weren't open in the evening.

How about weekends?

They used to—they were for a while open all day Saturday. Then a half day. Then, I think in the latter days they closed on Saturdays, if I remember right. I think so. It was the major stationery store of Boise all those years—and still is.

We went to church, of course, every Sunday. Every holy day—never would think of missing mass. And this was a great thing because it, it instilled my religion in me. And this is a very valuable thing which many people don't have today.

The Fourth of July always was a big, big thing. I'd save my money and Dad would put up some money for fire crackers. We'd be up at the break of dawn setting off fire crackers—under the neighbors' windows. Ummm, it was really big! I think we spent more money on fire crackers than any type of entertainment

or any other celebration. Everyone did it. It was a big, big thing. [Chuckles]

One incident that happened (I must have been in high school), a bunch of us on Halloween tipped over the outhouse of a neighbor widow, across the alley. Well, this created a huge storm in the neighborhood. And my dad finally wormed it out of me that I was in on it. So I had to go put it back up. [Laughs] They never let me forget that either.

And you never did that again, I bet.

I even remember the lady's name—Mrs. Herrick. I don't remember why she had an outhouse. We didn't have one.

Incidentally, when we moved the house to 1907 Jefferson from Twenty-eighth and Madison, Dad put in a full basement. And the summers in Boise were, of course, very hot, just like they are in Reno. And this was before the days of air conditioning. So he set up a second kitchen down in the basement. And we had a dining room table there. This gave Mother a cool place to cook in the summertime. This was really a great thing. It was very simple. Nothing fancy. Very handy and it worked very well. Funny thing happened, too. We had a phone. But we didn't have an extension. Well, an extension was too expensive to put in the basement. So, someplace I found an old-style phone and brought it home and dug into the wiring of the phone and figured a way to hook it up in the basement.

One day in high school they took us on a tour of the telephone company. And they were showing us the test panel. So the fellow who was showing us around said, "What is your number? I'll show how we test the line." So I blurted out our number. It was 2-8-1-8-J. And the fellow checked it. "You have an extension

out there, don't you?" [Laughs] Fortunately, I managed to keep my mouth shut and we had the extension all those years in the basement of the house. The oldstyle telephone—it was a funny thing that I had to call out that number.

Ah, a little bit about chores that we had around the house. My brothers and sister and I were—naturally we had certain things assigned to us. I don't remember specifically what mine were, but we had to take care of our own bedrooms. My brothers and I slept on the porch, because there wasn't room for us, even in the dead of winter we slept on the outside on this porch, which was only screened. Later on, Dad finished off the attic, put a stairway up into the attic of the house, and my brothers and I slept up there.

We had quite a lawn, and of course we had the lawn to take care of. Naturally, didn't have any sprinkling system, so we had to water. The furnace was a coal furnace and we had to take the clinkers out every so often. We always helped with the dishes, drying the dishes, helping Mother, all the things that a family has to do; when you're living and eating three meals a day in the house, there's a lot to be done. We didn't have a dryer, this was before the day of the dryer. We had an old-style washing machine with just the open agitator in it. And I remember one thing that Dad did buy Mother was a mangle, which she thought was the greatest thing ever because, of course, she was doing all the sheets. The sheets for the whole family—this amounted to quite a little bit, so the mangle helped her out a lot. Now you wouldn't bother with that; you just send 'em out or you—or they would be drip dry. So that's the way times change, I guess.

Was Monday the washday?

Yeah, Monday was washday, for sure. Everything— *everything* in our house was

regulated. It was almost set up on a schedule; it was—I suppose it was written down on a schedule. This was done today and that was done tomorrow, and if you didn't do what you were supposed to do, you knew about it.

Another thing that Dad was *extremely* particular about was putting tools back. If we used the hammer or something, that went back and was hung up; and I'll tell you if it weren't we heard about it damn quick. There was no such thing as dropping our clothes on the floor and walking off; we had a place to hang our clothes and—it was a hallway—we hung our heavy coats and things like that in, and they were always hung right. There was no such thing as throwing'em over a chair. I still practice that today. I come in, my clothes are hung up; they're not just tossed on the davenport or somewhere like that.

Incidentally, I might go back to when I was collecting for the *Statesman*. Naturally I got in—got to see in numerous homes, and it was absolutely amazing to me the condition of the homes. Another thing was that I just couldn't understand was women coming to the door with a nightgown on at eleven, twelve, one o'clock in the afternoon, or a housecoat, because I was used to seeing my mother get up early in the morning and get dressed. And then seeing the condition of the houses, junk all over 'em, and clothes and stuff piled everywhere and things dirty. I remember *so* vividly seeing that. Whereas our house was never that way; it was always spic and span and neat, and things were put back where they belonged.

Would you describe the neighborhood as middle class?

Yes, middle class, definitely. Not all the houses were that way, don't get me wrong,

but I saw many of them that way. And, I just couldn't understand a woman not being dressed at two, three, four o'clock in the afternoon [laughing], because of course in those days not many women worked, you see, like they do today. It—our whole neighborhood was what you'd call middle class, good neighbors and good friendly neighborhood.

How were you paid for these furnace jobs? On a weekly basis, a monthly basis?

Something like that, I don't remember what it was; it must have been a few dollars, I don't remember. I don't remember how much it was.

That began when, in November, December and ended when, about April?

Yeah, something like that, whenever they had to have their furnaces going early in the morning. And, one of the things that I think was really great about our family was that we had our meals always at home and always as a group. One of us didn't eat at one time and another at another time. And Sundays, of course, were always special; we always had something special for dinner. Mother always baked something. My oldest daughter has my mother's cookbook which is a very big cookbook all in her own handwriting. Incidentally, I zeroxed a lot of it and gave it to each one of the children, so that they had her recipes in her own handwriting. She put up enormous amounts of fruit, always did a lot of canning, jams, jellies, things that aren't done much today. All of my children have followed through on the family dinners; they all eat their dinners together, and I think this is a great thing, because this is the one time that

the family can at least sit down and associate with each other for a few minutes, especially today because there's so many diversifications that pull the family apart, like television and so many things that are going on that weren't in those days, really. After dinner we—of course we had no television, it was radio; we listened to certain programs, "Fibber McGee and Molly" or "Amos and Andy" or various things like that. We always had our bedtime stories. As we got older, of course we had our lessons to do, we had lots of study work to do. We had to get to our room and do it and get it done. And there was no monkeyin' around; we got it finished.

Our kitchen was very simple, but very adequate, just an electric stove and my mother had an electric mixer in the later years. A toaster we had which was quite unique; the toast went in on one end, was carried through on a little track and came out the other end, toasted. You could control the degree it was toasted by the speed of the track, and it worked very well. I think one of our children still has that toaster.

Oh, one thing that we did have too was a—when they came out—was an electric deep fat fryer, and my mother used to love to make doughnuts, and she always made lots of doughnuts. Of course, after I was married and we lived reasonably close to my folks, my children used to go over there all the time and Mother was always cooking something for them and doing some little thing for them.

What about Prohibition. What do you remember about that era?

Well, I just basically remember that Prohibition existed. My father made beer down in the basement and had a rig to cap

the beer with; he loved his bottle of beer in the evening when he'd come home. He made beer for years and years at home. I'd help him cap it, put it in the bottles. Many, many people did that in those days; it was nothing. I don't know, I don't suppose it was against the law actually, was it? To make beer, in those days? I don't know.

I believe it depended on the alcoholic content, what the percentage was. Can you take me through the process of his making the beer? Can you detail that in any way?

No, I don't really. I know it used to have to set so long and then it was drawn up and clarified and put in the bottles.

Were they dark bottles?

Quart bottles, dark bottles, yes. I remember the hand capper that you put the caps on with. Dad would have one or two bottles of beer in the evening or Saturday or Sunday afternoon, and maybe a friend'd come in and they'd have it. He always kept a little wine and a little brandy in the house—this is of course after Prohibition.

Did he have any desire ever to go down to the neighborhood tavern or saloon to have a beer with the boys?

No, not to my knowledge.

How did he socialize?

He had some good friends in business, they'd have coffee together and lunch once in a while together. Generally he came home for lunch, most of the time he came home. We had friends in the neighborhood and my

mother and dad would go over and visit or occasionally have dinner with them. But not too much; they had some old family friends that lived in Emmett; we'd see them once in a while or go over there. These were friends on my mother's side. And, really, not too much, he was busy taking care of his business and his family and his house, and so was Mother, just took up— seemed to take up their time really.

Did your father have a ritual of reading the newspaper in the morning or in the evening?

Oh, always, yeah. Oh yes, he read the paper from beginning to end, very much so.

And that newspaper, the Statesman, was it a morning or an evening paper?

Morning. Later on, they had an evening paper also, but at first they just had the morning paper.

I would imagine that his time for reading was in the evening, though.

Yeah, that's right. And he read a great deal of books, novels, and he was a fast reader, very comprehensive reader. He—in later years when he was at home a lot, he had a paperback place where they could trade books. He could go through a paperback in a day, extremely fast reader, way faster'n I am. He belonged to Knights of Columbus and was active in that.

Did he enjoy playing cards?

No. Never played cards, that I know of, maybe solitaire [chuckling]. No, they never—they never did anything like that.

How about checkers or chess?

No.

Did you play checkers or—?

Oh, I played checkers, sure. I never played chess; I used to play checkers, dominoes, that type of thing. We did those things at home, I guess, as kids. But, I don't ever remember him playin' any cards.

Poker was not one of his games, but was it ever one of your games?

Oh, later on, yeah. After I got out of high school and around, I used to play a little poker around, not a great deal. Later on, I mean not in the period we're talking about now.

You mentioned the radio program that you listened to in the evening, "Fibber McGee and Molly" and I imagine "Amos 'n Andy" and—.

Yes, there was Fred Allen and Jack Benny and, of course, George Burns and Gracie. And then there was Lowell Thomas with his news and travelogs. He used to sign off with, "So long until tomorrow." Maybe that is where I got the travel bug!

Was there one radio program that you all listened to as a family?

Oh, like "Amos 'n' Andy," yes, we'd always listen to that. And when TV came in, Dad thought Groucho Marx was about the best there ever was.

Going back a bit further, how many crystal sets did you build?

Oh, I don't know. I suppose a total of four, five, six maybe. That was quite a thrill to put one of those little things together and have it work. I guess kids still build them.

After dinner we just listened to maybe one or two programs, did our school work and went to bed. That was about the size of it. We'd eat, I suppose, about six-thirty, seven o'clock. So that's about all there was, was one radio program and sit around and read and then go to bed or do some lessons.

Did your mother receive any magazines that she liked and read, a religious magazine maybe?

Well, she took the church paper, *The Catholic Register*, and those kind of things. And, I remember we always got *Liberty* magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*, I don't know whether *Good Housekeeping* was in then or not. She would have taken some of the magazines, naturally, that were out at that time. *Life* of course. That was a big magazine when that came out. Everybody took that.

Do you remember how the refuse was collected in the city?

Somebody came by and picked it up; I don't remember who it was, whether that was city or an individual contractor, but it was put out once a week and they took it away.

Did you have to put it out in the front or—?

No, in the alley.

Now, was that a common thing to have in Boise, an alley through all the blocks

Yes.

Because now in all the new subdivisions, an alley is a rarity.

Yes, you don't see them. No, there was an alley in every block in town. Still is.

What kind of public transportation did the city of Boise have?

I don't know. They had some kind of a bus system, but I don't remember much about it. They had a streetcar in the early period, but then they must have had some kind of a bus system, and your legs, and a bicycle. I thought nothing of walking to school, *absolutely nothing*.

And how far would that have been?

Oh, let's see, the high school would have been twelve, fourteen blocks. Wasn't far at all. 'course most of the time, I suppose we'd use a bike.

Do you remember anything about the bike? What color was it?

One was a Schwinn bike, I don't remember the color. I know I had—I think I had a couple of Schwinn's. They still make 'em— not ten speeds though [chuckling].

Do you recall that there were any animals in town; did people keep horses?

No, we were in a residential area, so there was no horses there at all.

How about the delivery of milk?

Milk was delivered in glass bottles, quart bottles.

With the cream at the top?

Yeah, unhomogenized. And you could order cream. You could put the order out with the empty bottles about what you wanted the next day, if it was gonna change from what the regular order was.

Did you make your own ice cream?

Oh, I'd make it a lot of times. I've still got one of the mixers here that we used to have at home. We make it up here quite often.

That's the old "am strong" method.

Yeah, sure. It still is the best kind, the best one, the one you make by hand. And I use the rock salt with the ice and turn it, you know, for birthday or something special like that. In those days, to buy enough cream to make ice cream was something that had to be thought about and decided whether we could do it or not. Dad would decide whether we'd have ice cream or whether we wouldn't or "No, we had it last week; we won't have it this week." You know it's such a different thing today with children. They get whatever they damn well want, it seems like.

Was it a cost factor?

Cost factor. Yes, certainly. Yeah, sure.

That was part of his frugality.

That's right. In other words, we shouldn't have ice cream this week 'cause we had it last week, and it's too expensive to buy the cream, and the eggs. We had a small garden. We

generally had a few chickens, so we had eggs, just enough for eggs. This was just in a little backyard that we had at the house, so, you know, it wasn't big—just enough to produce some lettuce and cucumbers and maybe some beans and radishes and things like that.

What part did you play in keeping the garden?

Sure I'd have help to prepare it and do my share of it, and water and things like that. Ed and John had to too. All of us did.

That was pretty much a daily chore, was it not?

Well, yeah, or maybe this week was my week and next week was Ed's or John's. It was shared out, but we had to do it, and there was never any grumbling that I ever remember about doing it. That's a funny thing; I know families today; they ask 'em to do something, they bitch like hell about it. There's no such thing as that in our house; it was just part of the— part of our living; we just did it. And it was damn good training, I can tell you that, real good training, because it taught all of us how to work.

And how to share.

And how to share; it—that's right.

What about the discipline at school. Was there ever a problem that you can remember? That the teachers had or the principal had that—.

No, I can't particularly remember. But I'll guarantee you it wasn't like it is in school today, because I mean, if you got out of line, why you—your parents knew about it right now, and I don't remember of anybody gettin' kicked out of school, either in grade school or high school, but there was complete and

absolute discipline in class. There was no—no gettin' out of order or anything like that. I don't think there was any marijuana around those days either [laughing]

Tell me a little bit about your manual arts teacher. He instilled a great skill into you, a skill that you use today with great proficiency.

I can't remember his name. I can see him, but I can't remember his name. But it was just a regular manual training class that you learned how to use tools and how to work with wood and how to use power tools. And I took to it and liked it and did it at home then; I did it as much at home as I did it in school. I turned out a lot of things on the lathe: bowls, and nut bowls, and salad bowls, and lamps, and tables, a lot of things.

Do you recall the first item that you ever made?

I think one of the first might have been a little pair of lamps, and again, I think we have them in Carson, I turned the base on a lathe, and then wired them with the light, and then they had a parchment paper shade, and they set on each side of the clock in the living room. I think that might have been one of the first.

Was there ever a time when you entered one of your pieces in competition at the state fair?

No.

Did you win any awards, besides those that you got from Popular Science and Popular Mechanics?

No, not that I remember.

Was the state fair held in Boise?

Oh yeah, they had a state fair every year. And of course we always managed to go to that one day. It was just like any state fair.

Did your mother ever enter any of her cooking?

No.

Did she bake for the church?

Oh, oh sure. For cook—food sales and things like that, certainly, yeah, she always did that. Or for neighbors when they were sick, or maybe they were having a party or something like that, she'd do something for them. She was always doing things like that. And the neighbors would do for us, I mean if something happened.

What one thing that she baked do you still recall with fondness?

The chocolate cookies that we had at lunch today that Flora made, and the chocolate cake that she made. Flora makes the cake once in a while, particularly good cake. But she did, you know, everything, baking powder biscuits and pies, apple pies, lemon pies. She did a real good lemon pie. All of that type of thing which so many people don't do today, you know.

It didn't come out of a box?

No, no, it sure didn't come out of a box, no, I'll guarantee ya. No, Flora and our daughters still bake many things from my mother's recipes. And I think Flora learned a lot of things of baking particularly from my mother because her mother didn't do any baking. Her mother cooked big, heavy meals for the Basque boarders, but she didn't do any cooking of bakery things. Generally, for dessert the Basques always eat fruits, you

know, fresh fruit or canned fruit. So they didn't eat much pastry.

When and where did you meet your wife?

Flora worked for the theaters, the two theaters that were owned by the same people, the Pinney Theater and the Ada Theater. And, the manager of the Pinney Theater, Chuck Alderson, used to come in the first club I had—we're gettin' way ahead now in the story—but used to come in this first club that I had called the Congress Club which was a bottle club. You brought your whiskey in and then we charged for the service. And I used to always go around with him quite a little bit, and through him I met Flora, and I went with her on and off for I think about five or six years. And then one night we eloped. I will explain later on about this.

So then she was not really a childhood sweetheart?

No, not particularly. I was twenty-eight when I was married.

Who was your first girlfriend, the first big love in your life?

I'd have to say she was. A few dates here and there, but I never really went with anybody particularly.

What was a typical date like in high school? What would a couple do? Would they go to the movie?

You'd probably go to a movie, and I never did learn to dance so I never went to many of the dances. And, oh, we'd ride around in a car or, or the same thing about you do today, I guess.

Did the high school have homecoming?

Oh yeah, they had all of that.

And you attended the football games?

Oh sure!

And the basketball and baseball?

Yeah, that Austin I mentioned having, my first real car, one night I found it clear up inside the pillars on the high school steps. I was at a basketball game and a bunch of the guys packed it up there and put it in the high school steps, so I had to get a bunch of my friends and get it down [laughing]. It was like—almost like a capitol building, huge steps and then big pillars, and it was clear inside the pillars.

Did you ever figure out how it was done?

Oh yeah, I knew who did it. It was just a big joke; there was no animosity about it; it was just a fun thing to do.

Did you enjoy playing practical jokes on other people?

Oh yeah, we d always—sure, I've always done that type of thing. I don't remember any particularly in school, but I suppose I did a lot of them.

Halloween, what transpired at Halloween?

Well, as we got older we did pretty nasty things, like tippin' over the outhouse that I told you about and markin' on windows and all that type of stuff; there was no trick-or-treat in those days. It was just go out and get nasty [laughing].

Was there any neighbor that you liked to get nasty to?

No, [laughing] except the lady that had the outhouse, I guess. Oh, Halloween was a lot like it is today except that today's the trick-or-treat business, and then Halloween went—you did more as you got older I think than they do now. They grow out of Halloween at about ten, eleven years old here now. You know, really Halloween's just trick-or-treat for the little kids. Well, there it was more, oh, we'd let the air out of somebody's tires and things like that, but nothing ever very disastrous.

Your house was a one-story house, and it was yellow stucco with shingled roof, and it was moved—.

From Twenty-eighth and Bannock—Twenty-eighth and Madison to 1907 Jefferson. Madison was just a couple blocks off of Jefferson, so it was moved from Twenty-eighth to Nineteenth. It was moved about twelve blocks.

How long did that take?

I don't remember. Two, three days, I guess. Of course, it took a lot of preparation 'cause the basement and foundation had to all be put into the new house, the new area when the house was gonna be moved into it.

Where did you live when the house was being moved?

In it. Slept in the house every night. I don't remember what we did about meals, but we slept every night in the house.

Well, where would you—where would you go to the bathroom?

I don't know that, but we stayed in the house. I guess we went to some neighbor's house or something whenever we got a chance, 'cause we stayed in the house as it was moved.

Well, now it was on a city street all that time—.

Yeah, there were less laws and regulations then than there are now, about everything.

You had a lot of traffic going around you, yes?

No, no traffic, no. There weren't hardly any cars in those days, so there was no traffic. The house had a nice size living room and then the two bedrooms, and then we had the beds on the back porch. And, then Dad put the stairway in and finished off the attic, and there were beds upstairs where Ed and I and my younger brother John slept.

Dormitory style?

Yeah, it was a big room, big area up there. It was hotter than hell, but Dad had put in an attic fan which—the minute the sun went down, he'd turn that fan on and open the doors downstairs and that would pull the air right straight through the house and cool the whole house down, and also cool the attic down. It was a big fan; that was a great way to cool the house down. Of course, until the sun went down and it started to cool off in the evening, you couldn't do it. It wouldn't do any good. But he rigged that deal up himself and put it up there, very practical. In fact, I was readin' somewhere the other day in some magazine that it was suggesting just that, to carry the heat out of an attic, so there's nothing really new.

The kitchen had a nice little pantry which was very handy, you know, where you kept

all the canned goods and things like that, and then all the canned fruits, and jams, and everything were kept in the basement because it was cooler. And there was a lot of canning—Mother did an awful lot of that. Flora's mother used to do it; she'd can enough peaches to take care of the boarders all winter, and do it all herself, you know. In those days, my God, you wonder how the hell they did it.

A hot, steamy job.

Yeah, and she did it on a coal stove, and no complainin'.

What about family picnics, were there any?

A few. We didn't go on too many picnics. There was just this one family that was a friend of my mother's in Emmett, and we used to go over there once in a while, and we'd take food over and then eat somewhere out in the yard or once in a while we'd go to a park called Julia Davis Park and have a picnic. But that would be, maybe, once or twice a summer is all; it wasn't a regular thing.

Was it because your father did not particularly like picnics?

Oh no, no, I don't think that particularly, but on weekends he always had things to do around the house, to take care of, you see, 'cause he kept that house up real good. We painted the whole outside of the house—it was three or four times, he and I and Ed. Did it ourselves, all the woodwork, on the outside of the house, I don't mean the stucco. But the woodwork, all the doors and eaves and all of that.

And that was a lead base paint that you used.

Yeah, uh huh, sure.

What color was it, white?

No, it was a yellow that kind of went—the stucco was actually kind of a beige, and then the woodwork was yellow, as I remember it.

When you were living in the house while it was being moved, how were the meals prepared, nothing was hooked up?

I don't remember that. I think we must have just gone out and gotten something or, you know, it was only a matter of a few days, see. So—or maybe we went down to my grandmother's and ate at that time; that might've—maybe we did that. 'cause she lived quite a long ways away from us, but we coulda gone down there. I don't—I don't have the date of her death in here.

Did you and your father go on any fishing trips?

I don't remember explicitly. I think we went over a few times to a lake called Lake Lowell, maybe fishing.

Would you describe your father as an outdoorsman?

No. Not particularly. His time was involved in his work, which was every single day, and his Sundays were taken up in [and] his evenings in the yardwork, and watering, gardening, and fixing and doing things around the house, so if there was a new cabinet to be put in or something like that, he'd do it. Like in the basement, he did all kinds of things, fixed up down there. Well, all those things took time, you know. And as we got older, we helped him.

Do you remember your first family trip? Was it by auto?

Yeah, we went to—I mentioned that; we went to Seaside, Oregon, I think, several different years. This was a resort area in Oregon on the beach, and we used to go to the same little place, get a little cottage and be there for maybe a week.

How about any of the national parks, Yellowstone?

Well, I went up to Yellowstone later on, but we didn't go as a family up there. These things were out of reach, you see, from a financial standpoint. My father's first consideration was that—taking care of that family and providing a house for 'em to live in and providing the food and saving some money. He had a constant program his whole life for putting money away, whether it was ten dollars, or twenty dollars, he had a plan set up to do that. And he religiously kept to that; he was a very methodical man. And, a trip to Yellowstone would have been an expensive trip, it'd been too much—too expensive to drive up there probably. That's—he and Mother never went on a trip by themselves that I know of.

When they celebrated their anniversary, how was it done? Did they go out? Stay at home—?

No, no, no. Dad would always buy a gift of some kind, and we'd have a nice dinner and that was it. Generally—nearly always he brought some flowers home or maybe a nice new vase or something that Mother would like and enjoy, nice things, though, not cheap things, no junk. Because he knew china, you see, he knew because he worked in Sellers store, so he knew that—he knew china; he

knew nice things and what he could afford. Oh no, he never forgot an anniversary or anything like that. But they never went on any trips or went out or anything like that.

What kind of birthday or Christmas gifts did the children, you and your brothers, get?

Well, I don't remember any specific things, but, you know, maybe it was a "trike" as we were at that age, or it was always something that was practical, clothes, and erector sets, maybe some kind of tool or something that we were interested in. And we always—every one of us always got our mother things for her birthday and our father, each one of us did those things, and we still do 'em with all our family. Lots of families don't do that, you know—birthday could be less than nothing.

Your father's savings were in the bank?

Yes, he had savings accounts; he had some insurance annuities.

Any postal savings?

No, I don't—no postal savings. I remember he had some savings and so did I in a bank that went broke, and then we recovered, I don't know, sixty, seventy percent of it. He had some Idaho Power stock, a little bit. And when he died, he had, I think, a little over a hundred thousand dollars, ninety to a hundred thousand dollars, which was a *big* sum of money for him to save under those circumstances and raise a family. And then he was retired for quite a few years before he died, and this money was enough to take care of all of Mother's expenses all the years that she was sick and in the hospital, hospital or in a rest home. So he had it planned out pretty

well. And there was just practically nothing left when it finished up, which I think was wonderful. He'd sure be happy today to know that, because he wanted to be sure that he took care of her and that we didn't have to. This was uppermost in his mind, which got to be ridiculous in the position that I was in, you know, because I could have taken care of her in any way, shape, manner, or form without ever bothering me at all. And he knew that, all through the later years of his life, but that didn't make any difference. That money was to provide for her.

So really his retirement was one of caring?

Oh, it sure was.

He didn't retire and start making a bunch of trips or anything like that, he just—no, no, 'cause he was—he, let's see, he sold in 1954 at the age of sixty-eight and he lived to be seventy-six. So he actually was retired for eight years. He did lots of things for the neighbors during those years too. Older ladies that their husbands died and needed this fixed in the house or that fixed or somethin' else, he was always busy helpin' somebody around, goin' over and fixin' a door that wouldn't close or a lock that wouldn't work or something like that. And he loved doing it, and he was always helping us. I mean—as we got married, each one of us, and then had our houses—we needed something fixed or something repaired, he was tickled to death to be over there doing it.

What political views did your father have?

Ultra-conservative [chuckling]. I don't really know that he was Republican or Democrat, but he sure wouldn't agree with a lot of things that are goin' on today I can tell you that [chuckling], and neither do I, no.

Did he speak much of politics while you were growing up?—express a political point of view?

Not too much, no, maybe—I don't recall too much in that way.

Harding, Coolidge, Hoover? Roosevelt?

I just don't—he'd agree or disagree with them, you know. I think much like we do today, you know; it's just like you wonder where our country's goin' today with the way Carter's handling it. I don't think it's goin' in a very good direction, myself.

Your father being in the stationery business, did he happen to have a typewriter at home?

Yeah, he had a typewriter, but I don't know what happened to it. He had an old typewriter at home; in fact he used to repair typewriters. You know, small repairs in the—right in the store.

Could it be that that trait was handed on to you and you found its fruition in pinballs and slot machines?

Oh, I don't think there's any question about it, because he was always handy at doing things, and so I think that that's where I got it.

Did he have this repair facility in the back of the store?

He didn't do any heavy repair on typewriters, just light repair. He wouldn't tear 'em clear down, and you know, wash 'em all up and rebuild 'em or anything like that. If somebody came in with a typewriter where there was a—one letter wasn't workin' or something like that or the ribbon was mixed up, why he could fix it, of course. He did a

lot of mimeograph work in the store; that was one source of income in the store. You know, instead of a Xerox, why, you had a mimeograph. They did an awful lot of that. He ran a hell of a tight ship in that store, too, I can tell you that. That's [chuckling] why it made money over all the years, and is still there.

How often did he do an inventory?

I would say once a year.

And he would close down for two days, or would he confine the inventory to a weekend where he wouldn't lose a business day?

Oh, he wouldn't lose a business day on it; the inventory would maybe take a couple of days, and they'd just keep track of what was sold in between time and adjust it. After all, it was just he and his partner in there, so they—it wasn't very critical, you see. He knew where he stood all the time.

Did he maintain a delivery wagon? Or was that provided by someone else?

No, they generally had somebody in the store to deliver. Ed and I worked in there a lot of times doing that, delivering.

How much state government business did he do?

Lots of state business. The store was very respected because he ran a good store and he kept the right stock, and it wasn't a stationery store as you know it today with greeting cards, note paper and gift items. This was strictly an office supply store. It's pretty much the same today. I think these people have added a few things now, which they should, but he didn't; he didn't believe in that.

Then he carried all those different columnar pads and everything, had a huge basement underneath, carried a good stock, if he could get two percent, why he'd get it. That's the way he made it. And this young man, John Beam, was working in the store, and then he sold to him, and he's kept exactly the same format. In fact, he didn't remodel the store until about three years ago. But it's just exactly like Dad had it. And he remodeled it, and then his three sons—this fella's sons are in there now operating it.

The store was right in downtown Boise in the Idaho building. In fact, I had an office in the Idaho building later on after I got these clubs started and everything and had the necessity of having an office and a bookkeeper and a secretary and all, why I had an office.

I know for our first house, I paid five thousand dollars for the first house I bought in Boise. That was in 1941, I think.

Tell me more about your years of growing up in Boise.

During the latter part of grade school and high school, I worked for a company called Spaulding Advertising Company, which delivered handbills. This was a big thing in those days; you delivered handbills to the houses, put them inside the screen door or up on the steps. We did this in Boise and also Nampa and Caldwell [Idaho]. And one of the highlights I remember is going over to Nampa and Caldwell—was always a big trip. The son of Mr. Spaulding would go with us. He was just a few years older than I was at the time. And we'd always have lunch in one particular cafe in Nampa, and peculiarly I remember that I always ordered roast pork. Why, I don't quite remember, but apparently it was extremely good roast pork. This provided a lot of spending money for

me, and we used to do it three or four times a week, as I remember.

One other thing is that all through the years that we were home and after I graduated from high school and had work of some type, we contributed to the expenses at home, paying Mother some amount—I don't remember the amounts. Of course, it varied as the years went along, but I paid a specific amount when I was living there after I got out of high school. My brothers did the same thing. I mentioned having pneumonia. I think I forgot to say that I had it so bad that they felt I wasn't gonna make it and gave me last rites of the church, namely Extreme Unction.

Another interesting thing was that in those days, of course before television, the World Series were always quite *a big thing*, the *Idaho Statesman* sponsored a large baseball diamond, made on plywood which had magnetic characters on it for the players and loudspeaking system and that was set up in the center part of town. And during the World Series games everybody gathered around, and you could actually watch the game being played on this imitation diamond. And it was quite an event. I'd say three, four hundred people would always gather around and watch the game as it went along. Of course, today we watch it on television.

Do you remember which series?)

No, I'm sorry I don't. I just remember that we always watched the Series; we always had little side bets on them of some type or a lot of times we'd promote baseball pools, just like we do today and—for small amounts, a dollar or something like that.

And how often did you win?

Oh [chuckling], I don't remember. Okay, I think now we'll get into the years just at the point of when I got out of high school and was still working at the *Statesman* and gradually got into the slot machine and pinball and punch board business. I mentioned earlier in this tape that I had made my own pinball machine and had it in the Tillotson Sporting Goods store. This led me to starting to buy pinball machines, and put them on location in various places or various types of businesses. Also, we had punch boards. I don't know whether anybody today knows what a punch board is. This was a board made of cardboard that had maybe a thousand, or two thousand, or five thousand holes in it, and these holes were filled with numbers printed on paper which were folded up accordion style. There would be prizes offered for certain numbers on the board. The customers would punch the numbers out of these holes with a little metal punch that was tied to the board with a string. The boards cost—actually cost very little. I would put them in a soda fountain or cigar store or a beer parlor on a percentage basis of what the board would make. So the board would maybe cost me three dollars, and the board would—certain boards might make a net profit of thirty dollars or fifty dollars, and I would split with the—with the store owner. They would keep the money, and we'd split. The biggest problem we had was people stealing punches. They'd punch a whole bunch into their hand, and hold them and then only pay for a few and then come back in later and cash in the winners. However, the boards made lots of money and so did the pinballs. I gradually got into slot machines, bought at that time mainly from Mills Novelty Company in Chicago.

This went on through '32, '33, '34, '35, and at that time the machines were legal in Idaho with, as I mentioned before, two master

licenses in Boise, so that there were only myself and Gem State Novelty operated by Harold Pepple, who were operating the machines. It got into a pretty big operation. We had machines in Nampa, Caldwell, Emmett, all the surrounding towns, and of course in Boise. At that time there was a club in the Hotel Boise, a small club which was a locker club. Now a locker club was where you brought your own liquor into the store. You bought your liquor at the state liquor store, you brought your own bottle of whiskey into the club, and it was kept in a small locker. You might have two, three, four bottles of whiskey in the locker. You and your friends came in and had a drink. The bartender went and got your bottle, served the drink, charged a fifteen- twenty-cent service charge. I had the machines in this Congress Club, had four machines in the place, and they did extremely well.

During that time through those years there was a cigar store called the Waldorf Cigar Store. This was located very close to the *Statesman*, and I became acquainted with these owners, Otto and Fred Heuck, at the time that I worked for the *Statesman*. A lot of the employees of the *Statesman*, the pressmen, the linotype operators, the editorial staff, sort of hung out there. And of course I knew them all, and so I spent quite a bit of time in the Waldorf. Otto and Fred Heuck were extremely well thought of in the city, and everybody cashed their checks there because they always had cash available to cash checks. The cigar store was actually a beer parlor with a few card games, runny and panguini and things like that, light stuff, not heavy type of gambling.

This Congress Club owner was a fellow who did a lot of drinking, and he often talked when he'd get full of whiskey that he was gonna sell the place. Well, this bothered me because I was scared to death that if he sold it,

I'd lose the operation of the machines [five-, ten-, twenty-five-, fiftycent denomination machines]. So I mentioned this to Otto Heuck one night, and he says, "Well look," he said, "do you think you can buy it?"

And I said, "Yes," I said, "but the situation is gonna be, though, that is, he's just gonna sell it all of a sudden. It isn't gonna be a thing that he's gonna think about for weeks and then do. Some night he's gonna get drunk and want to sell it."

So he said, "Well, here," he said, "I'll just give you a check." So he wrote out a check, a blank check, signed his name to it, and said, "You carry the check and you'll be ready to make a deal. And he said, "You pay up to five thousand dollars for the business."

Well this tickled me because I knew if Otto owned the business that I'd be able to continue to operate the machines because at that time I had machines in the Waldorf also.

So weeks went by, and sure enough this fellow got full of whiskey one night and rantin' and raving and said he wanted to get out of the damn business. So I got to talking to him, and we struck up a deal, and he agreed to sell. I knew that it was important to make the deal immediately, so we called an attorney. We went up to his office—this was at night, nine ten o'clock at night—drew up a contract, and I made the deal that night. Filled out the check for exactly five thousand dollars, and the next day I went over and told Otto that he owned the Congress Club. So he says, "All right," he said, "that's great. Now," he said, "you're gonna run it."

And I said [chuckling], "Oh, no, I'm not gonna run it; I'm in the machine business. I don't know *anything* about that."

"Well," he said, "you've got a third of it and my brother has a third of it and I have a third of it. And you run it." I was only twenty-four at this time.

Well, I balked at it because I really didn't want to get into that business, but I eventually did. And he didn't want his brother to know that he owned a third of it, because the brother, Fred, did a lot of drinking and a lot of gambling; and Otto knew that if Fred knew that he owned this additional source of income that he would just blow it. I went on and ran the place as it was for quite a while and then decided that it should be remodeled. And we brought a man from Salt Lake City by the name of Hugo Claussen, an old German who had done an enormous amount of decoration work in churches and also businesses. He decorated the place, and in its day it was—it was really an elaborate decoration. It was a very small place, only seated twenty-six people, counting the bar. We put in good furniture, carpet; it was a comfortable, small place and still had five or six slot machines.

The club went on to continue to do good, good business. We had—lots of the prominent people of Boise were there. It was actually a membership club. Very small charge for the membership, but you had to be a member to come in. We were extremely careful and strict on the protection of people's liquor, and if they ran out of liquor, that was just it; we didn't have liquor of our own to sell them. We lived exactly by the rules and we were able to continue to operate. This was legal in Idaho at that time.

It went on—I operated it for quite a few years. I can't remember exactly how many. I might be able to figure that out later on, but let's go on. All this time, Fred never knew that he owned a third of the business; it was Otto and I. At Otto's death, then I went and told Fred that he owned a third interest. Of course, he was completely dumbfounded and amazed. And Otto had got the money to Fred by funneling it through the cigar store

business. Otto more or less ran the place, and Fred never knew that part of this money was coming from the Congress Club over the years [laughing], and he didn't know that he owned the place when his brother died. So I went and told him; we had no papers between us in any way, shape, manner, or form. No agreement, contracts, anything. So at that time, Fred went on with me as a partner for a while, and then he decided he wanted to sell out—I think he needed some money, so I bought his interest out.

The manager of the Hotel Boise was Virgil McGee, and he used to be, of course, a good customer in the club too. But he—he just couldn't stand to see the business that we were doing, so they formed a club called the Aero Club and put in a very elaborate, fancy club, much larger and naturally much better than the poor little old Congress Club, and just naturally assumed it would put me out of business. But we continued—the Congress Club continued to prosper, and the Aero Club had practically no business at all. Actually at that time, this was during the war, and of course there were a lot of officers from Gowan Field [Boise] and the Aero Club only allowed the officers to come in, and of course we allowed the—anybody to come in who wanted to belong. Well, the officers didn't like that, even having the privacy of the Aero Club, and most of them came into the Congress Club. So eventually my lease ran out, and I lost the location.

We'll go back now to just a few little more things about the Congress Club, to elaborate on how people's liquor was kept. We started out with keys for the lockers. This became rather burdensome; people would forget their key—and so eventually we just—we didn't have any keys. I was extremely strict on employees touching anybody's whiskey, and we gained the reputation that a bottle could

stay there for a year or two years and it would still be there when somebody came back. People often commented about this; they—a salesman would be there, and then maybe they wouldn't get back for six, eight months, and they'd come back in and their bottle would still be in the locker. Consequently, why people respected the Congress Club, and I think that's why always continued to do an excellent business.

To go back a little further, on the pinball machines, in some areas, some cities, you could pay off in money, when you got a high score, and they'd pay something in cash over the counter. Later on, why, the machines became automatic, and they would drop coins. If machines were—if it were illegal to pay off in cash, then they would give free plays. You'd win ten or twenty free plays. These free plays would build up on a counter and as you—each time as you played it, why it would take one off. Oftentimes, in certain areas, why you would still collect on the free games from the proprietor of the store. He would keep a record of this and would get that back when we counted the money in the machines. While this was illegal, it was done quite frequently in a lot of areas.

Machines became—of course the slot machines ended up making more money than the pinball machines. At the time of the Congress Club operation, the city of Boise and other areas sort of just allowed the machines to operate. This was a private club so it wasn't open to the public, and the door was locked; people had a key when they came in. If they'd forgotten the key, they'd press the buzzer, and you'd open the door. But this was basically the way the locker clubs operated. In some clubs operated by other people, they did keep a bottle of whiskey on hand. If somebody ran out they could buy a bottle of whiskey. However, we never did this because this was

one way that we could really get into trouble, and there was no sense in taking that kind of a chance.

The Hotel Boise at that time was the main hotel in town, and it was located just a block from the state capitol. We did lots of business with the lobbyists and with the legislators at the time; many of them became just regular customers; it was a regular meeting place for them because it was right in the hotel. Many of them had rooms in the hotel during the legislature. And this is one thing that made the Congress Club quite popular at that time.

I went on then at that point and put a locker club in the Saratoga Hotel in Caldwell. I first started with a small place and then enlarged it, put in a very elaborate dining room called the Walnut Dining Room. It was all a real wood walnut panelling, and did an excellent business in a very small club which we called the Saratoga Club in connection with this dining room. Later on, I don't know just what year, I bought the hotel and actually operated the hotel, which was about a sixty-room hotel—quite an old hotel. It's still operating today, incidentally.

I'm gonna jump back to the Congress Club again. I mentioned that Hugo Claussen, an old Dutchman, did the decoration. He had done lots of church work, and his design was in—in geometric designs with lots of use of gold leaf, silver leaf, and various colors. He did lots of this work himself. It was—it was really an extremely beautiful club, and I remember at the time that Otto Heuck thought that it was really wrong that we were spendin' the kind of money that we were to decorate this club and go to the expense of doing it. However, it certainly proved out because people liked it and it was—it was the nicest place to go in Boise to have a drink at that time. All through those years it stood up very well.

About that time I met a man by the name of Cliff Hinckley and Cliff was acquainted with the Lewiston, Idaho area. This is up in northern Idaho. We formed a partnership and went up and put in a club called the Club McCoy. This was also decorated by Hugo Claussen, much on the sane style as the Congress Club. And this was in the Lewis & Clark Hotel. It was operated the same way as the Congress Club and did a tremendous business. It was a very good operation. We—Hinckley and I then put a club in Grangeville called the Club Imperial. Grangeville was south of Lewiston, a very small town. It again did a—did a good business. We had managers in all these clubs, and they continued through the years to do good business. This was in approximately 1938 when I put in the Imperial in Grangeville. Then I went to Pendleton— Pendleton, Oregon, and there was a hotel called the Temple Hotel there.

The manager at the Club Imperial was Miles Flanigan. He later became postmaster of Grangeville; I haven't heard from him in years. Then, I hired a young fella who had come out of the CCC Camp [Civilian Conservation Corps] by the name of Jess Rainey, and he worked in Grangeville for a while and then he went over to Pendleton. He was—he'd had no education at all; however he was a very honest, very faithful employee and did a good job.

The Roundup Room in Pendleton was, again, a locker-type operation, with about a half a dozen slot machines. We had one interesting experience in Pendleton. There was a lady who was the wife of a dentist, and she would be waiting in the lobby in the morning when we opened at eleven o'clock. She was about, oh, I'd judge, remembering back, about in her fifties somewhere. She would have already been to the bank and bought half dollars, and she would play the machines from the time we opened until—

maybe not constantly, but on and off—until just before five o'clock, then she would go home in time to be home when her husband got home. She came in with the half dollars because she was kidding herself and kidding the other customers that she was winning. Of course, she wasn't; she spent an enormous amount of money, and she used to—she became of course very well acquainted with the people working in the club, and she used to tell them, "Oh, my goodness, if my husband ever looks in that safety deposit box." So, it's my guess that he was cheatin' the government by slippin' the money in the safety deposit box, and she was sneakin' it out and bringin' it down to the Roundup Room to put in the slot machines. [Chuckling] It was always kind of funny. One day she didn't show up; we'd found out she'd died, and I just about had a heart attack. This was, I believe, in about '39. I always wondered what her husband thought when he opened the safety deposit box. And in '39 I also opened the Sports Shop in Caldwell, Idaho. I still had the Saratoga Club there. This had just a restaurant and no machines—no slot machines in it; we had punch boards, and it did a reasonably good business. Also about this year I opened a place in Mountain Home, Idaho, called the Oregon Trail Cafe, actually bought a place. And we were able to have slot machines there. I put in as manager Ollie Balmer. His father worked as a card dealer in some various places in Mountain Home and in Twin Falls. And I became acquainted with Ollie, and put him in as manager of the Oregon Trail Cafe. He was in the Oregon Trail Cafe until we closed it and moved to Nevada; then he came on down to Nevada with me and went to work in the Carson Nugget. He stayed in the Carson Nugget until I sold it, and then came to work at the Sparks Nugget and is still working there for John Ascuaga in the capacity of assistant general manager.

Very capable young man and completely and absolutely honest and honorable.

The same year I opened a place in Parma, Idaho, again a locker club with a few slot machines. These were all basically the same type of operation, all reasonably successful, of course, naturally, some more so than others.

I would like to add here that a small article that I found in a trade magazine and happened to cut out has had a profound effect on my life, on my success in business in particular. Mills Novelty Company who produced slot machines had a small trade magazine and one time I happened to pick it up and read this little item. I'll read it to you:

Take 'NO' as a Starter
I Will Find a Way or Make One

In business—as well as in all other pursuits in life—the closed door, the blockade, the “NO” is the normal thing! Expecting to get what you are seeking the first time is a baby's idea—an experienced man knows it just doesn't happen that way. If your personal feelings of encouragement on the one hand, and depression on the other, are based on whether or not you are searching for pushovers, you are going to be depressed most of the time! Realize that “NO” is the common, ordinary answer. When you get that “NO,” your work begins. Find a way around it, over it, or under it, and if your search reveals no way, why, go out and make a new way!

It's signed by James T. Mangan. He was some official with Mills Novelty Company. I don't know now just what his capacity was. I had these printed up; I always had one on my desk. I gave them to lots of employees. We'd

have a problem of some kind, an employee'd say, “Oh, there's just no way to make that work.” I'd reach in my desk and give him one of the little blue papers. It just happened to be that I'd printed this on blue paper, so I always called it the little blue paper. John Ascuaga has followed this philosophy right down the line. I don't think there's any question of doubt that it in itself was one of the major reasons for my success in business, because all through my business career, there were numerous times when I was attempting to do something that practically everybody thought was impossible. A good example was going into Carson. At that time, people thought this was an idiotic idea. Nobody could make a go of it in Carson. Same thing happened in Sparks. If I had asked twenty-five people (knowledgeable people in the gaming business) whether a casino would be a success in Sparks, they would have said, “No.” And that of course, seemed to be all the more reason that I felt that it would work. So, I went in with a different type of operation than what was normal in the area at that time, and by taking “NO” as a starter, I made the Nugget the success that it was.

That's been the common thread through your entire business career and even to this day, even in your travels, I find that when you are confronted with a “NO” situation, you turn that “NO” into a “YES.”

Well, that's quite true. My theory is that there's always some other way to do it, whatever it might be.

When did you first come upon this quotation. Was it in Idaho or here in Nevada?

No, no, this was in Idaho. This was when I was first in the slot machine business, way

back in, I'd say, '36, '7, '8, along in there, 1936 to 1940 somewhere in that area.

In your travels back to Chicago and your visits to the Mills Novelty Company, did you ever meet Mr. Mangan?

No, I can't say that I ever did. I just know that he was in the managerial end of the business somewhere. But I never did meet him.

Now tell me about Flora Aguirre.

During the years when I had the pinballs and the punch boards, even before I had the clubs, I met a fellow by the name of Chuck Alderson. He was the manager of the Pinney Theatre, which was just very close, actually, to the Congress Club at the time. However, I met him some years before that. Through him I was introduced to a girl that worked for him by the name of Flora Aguirre. I started going with Flora along about '33 or '34, along in there. She used to ride around with me in my pickup truck and my panel truck, and we'd go to Nampa or Caldwell and I'd be servicing slot machines, and we'd—we went together reasonably steady during those years.

Then, of course, at that time I had the Congress Club, the Saratoga Club and the Club McCoy, and all these various places. And one night in October 1940, Flora and I were over at the Saratoga Club, and we'd gone over there and had dinner. And we just decided that maybe we should get married. So we came back to Boise. At that time I was living in the Hotel Boise; came back to Boise and I got ahold of my accountant, and told him what we were gonna do. We couldn't get a plane out of Boise naturally at night, so we drove to Salt Lake and got a plane in Salt Lake and went to San Francisco. I had my clothes with me, and

Flora had the clothes on her back. We called Flora's mother from Mountain Home. I was twenty-eight at the time; Flora was twenty-five. And her mother had an absolute fit, and thought we were gonna be married by the justice of the peace in Mountain Home and demanded that she come home. But we went on and went to Old Saint Mary's [church] in San Francisco and knocked on the door and the priest came to the door. His name was Father Francis P. Mannion, and we just politely told him we wanted to be married. And he looked at us like we were crazy—had holes in our head. He says, "How do I even know you're Catholics? I don't know anything about you. And besides," he says, "you gotta wait three days because of the California law." So we went back to see him the next day and got him to call our parish priests, and he found out who we were and that we'd known each other for a long time. And so he said, "All right, as soon as you get the license, why you can be married." So we were married in Old Saint Mary's on October 26, 1940.

We stayed in a hotel called the Broadmoor Hotel, and these friends of mine had a bar in the hotel called the Cuban Room. Otto Stoehr and Ramon. Well, they were very nice to us, and of course we wanted to go on a honeymoon and we didn't know where we wanted to go, and so they talked us into going on a cruise in the Caribbean. Otto had worked as steward and bartender on a lot of cruise ships, so he knew quite a bit about it—a great deal about it and suggested this particular trip. And it was a trip through the Caribbean on a banana boat. The M.S. *Contessa* operated by Standard Fruit Company. We flew to New Orleans and picked up this banana boat, and we were on the cruise for probably twelve, fourteen days.

The captain's name was Captain John and a very great person. We were seated at the

captain's table along with three ladies from Chicago. Well, the first evening, one of these ladies [Gladys Bitner] came down in super elegant clothes and probably had a couple hundred thousand dollars worth of jewels on. And to show what kind of a person she was—our first stop was Havana—she bought all new clothes because all of her clothes were too good for what the rest of the passengers were wearing. She locked all her jewels in the safe, and we never saw them again. And these three ladies remained friends all through the years. In fact one of them, Dorothy Harris, visited us just a year or two ago in Hawaii. We hear from them regularly, all of them. And they were very wonderful people. We visited their homes in Chicago a few times—the husband of one of these ladies had a wine cellar of all pre-*World War I* whiskey. I'd never seen such a thing in my life. They were all very wealthy people, but they were very super-gracious to us, and we have remained friends.

This ship touched Havana; Cristobal, Canal Zone; Ceiba, Honduras; that's where they picked up most the bananas. I think it was about ten- to fourteen-day trip, but it was a lovely trip. The food was fantastic, and everybody had a good time. There were not very many passengers. The trip on the banana boat was delightful in every way, and I don't think either one of us even got sick. We came back to New Orleans and stayed a few days there going to the—all the regular places, Antoine's restaurant, and the Latin Quarter, and the jazz bands and everything that makes up New Orleans, and then came home.

I noticed you found the wedding album.

Yes, Flora and I found the album tucked away. This goes back to our marriage and honeymoon. The album which contains quite a bit of—in fact, a lot of mementos and

information on our honeymoon and our trip on the *Contuse* down into the Caribbean. An interesting item is that we had breakfast at the Golden Pheasant restaurant which is at Powell and Geary in San Francisco. 'course, it's no longer there, but if you wanted to go first-class, you could go for number four which was fifty cents. This included your selection of persian melon, casaba melon, baked pear, stewed fresh rhubarb, fresh grapefruit, sliced pineapple and many other items, plus ham or bacon and eggs with toast, jelly, marmalade and coffee. This was all for fifty cents.

I saw where we had dinner at the Coconut Grove at the Los Angeles Ambassador Hotel. The whole dinner, complete dinner, appetizers, soup, salad, choice of entrees which included tenderloin steak, lamb chops, Long Island duckling at the unbelievable price of three dollars.

The trip on the *Contuse* took us to Havana, Cristobal in the Canal zone and two ports in Honduras and then back to New Orleans where we started. To backtrack just a little bit, we flew from Los Angeles on American Airlines, paying three dollars extra for a berth and the flight took us eleven hours from Los Angeles to Memphis and then there was a layover of a few hours and it was a two-hour-and-a-half light from Memphis to New Orleans. I don't know what you'd do this trip in now. I suppose a nonstop flight from Los Angeles to New Orleans now would be around three and a half, four hours. Unfortunately, I don't remember the type of plane we made this trip on.

Another interesting thing is that the *Saturday Evening Post* on August 22, 1943 ran a story entitled "Twelve Desperate Miles." We were married in 1940 and that's when we were aboard the *Contessa*. This was a story about the invasion of North Africa. The British and Americans wanted to come in and

take the airfield at Casablanca. There was no problem in taking the airfield, but once they got in there they were out of gas and out of ammunition. So they had to come up with some way to have supplies at the airport at Casablanca. The airfield lay twelve miles up a very shallow and unnavigable river by the name of Sebou. Very little was known about the river, but they did feel that if they could get a small enough ship that they could get up the river. They searched all over for something that could do this. Somebody came up with the idea of the *Contessa*. They found the *Contessa* at sea, directed them into dry dock, repaired the ship, loaded it with ammunition and gasoline and sent it off across the Atlantic. It got to the river and negotiated its way up the river—just getting there was a very great feat in itself, being able to dodge all of the enemy ships and airplanes that would have been in the Atlantic at the time. They'd worked their way up the river, got stuck a couple times and were able to back off the sandbars. Finally they got onto one sandbar and they couldn't get off it. So, Captain John decided that the only thing to do was to wait until the tide came in and hope that it would raise it up enough. When the tide came in he started the engines and with the force of the tide and the engines he was able to get the *Contessa* off the sandbar; however, in the process, it got completely turned around in the river. Now he was in a terrible fix, so, he quickly came up with the idea of simply backing on up the river which he did the last two or three miles and was able to unload the ammunition and fuel which actually saved the day for the invasion of North Africa. And of course, this was the ship that we were on on our honeymoon a little less than three years previous.

Of course, we came home with some apprehension because I didn't know just how Flora's folks were gonna take the fact that she

was married to a fella in the slot machines business, and in those days why there was a little apprehension about somebody marrying a Basque even. But everything was really quite perfect, and the whole situation was accepted. Dad had rented an apartment, a small apartment for us. And in a very short time, we bought a house at 2502 Bannock Street which was not too far from my folks' house. My folks lived at 1907 Jefferson, and we lived at 2502 Bannock, and Bannock was one street off of Jefferson, so that would have made it six, seven blocks away. This was a small house on a corner. We bought it with most of the furniture and appliances in it for five thousand dollars. The same people that we sold to still live in the house today and keep it up beautifully. In fact, my daughter drove by it when we were up in Idaho on this fishing trip recently.

Along in 1937, '38, I decided I wanted to learn to fly, and with the main idea that I would eventually own an airplane because by this time our business was gettin' spread out and an airplane would be very handy for me. I took lessons from a man by the name of Jack McConnell who had been flying for years. He was at that time about fifty years old I guess. And I went through the course with him and got my license with him. One thing he told me which probably has saved my life two or three times was, and he repeated this to me about a thousand times, "Never let your desire to get someplace get the best of your better judgment." In other words, always delay a trip or turn around and come back if the weather isn't right. And even today, most people are killed in small airplanes because of sticking their neck out, trying to get someplace when they could just as well wait another day or another half a day or another week.

The first airplane I owned was a bi-wing Stearman, and I hired a young chap by the

name of “Dud” Dillingham to fly for me because I didn’t feel at that point that I was competent enough to fly myself. And he flew the airplane for me for several years, and then in about 1941 I bought my first airplane, an Ercoupe. This was a brand new airplane which was a low-wing, two-place plane, flew at about a hundred and ten miles an hour, and was noteworthy because it was almost impossible to stall the airplane. Stalling an airplane is when you get the nose too high and the wing falls off and you go into a spin. This airplane would fall off, but it would just wallow and would not go into a spin which is very difficult to get out of and which is—at that time and even now, kills many people in small airplanes.

Shortly after we were married I developed an ulcer, which was diagnosed through X-rays, and the doctor put me on a super strict diet which I lived up to in its entirety and was on the diet for almost a year. And they decided that the ulcer had been completely cured. However, I somehow or other got to thinking that it wasn’t cured, and that maybe I’d read somewhere about ulcers causing cancer, and I thought I could feel something in my stomach, and I made up my mind that I’d go to Mayo brothers. I made all the arrangements without Flora knowing about it, told her that I was going to Chicago to the Mills Novelty Company that manufactured slot machines, and instead of that went to Rochester, Minnesota to the Mayo Clinic and called her from there. Going through the Mayo Clinic was quite an experience. They were super thorough, and while they could find the scars from the ulcer, they could find nothing else wrong with me in any way, shape, manner or form. Gave me a lot of advice about not letting things worry me, told me that the number one cause of ulcer is diet, number two cause is—(included in diet is smoking)— and

number three cause is worry and tension. I’m satisfied that my visit to [the] Mayos kept me from ever having this ulcer come back. God knows in the later years I had plenty of reason to have enough worry to have it come back, but I taught myself to sort of ride things out and not stew about them.

The diet that I was on was a typical ulcer diet which is bland foods, lots of milk, eggs, no liquor, no smoking, all the food pureed, more or less. I don’t remember the exact restrictions on the types of food or anything, but it was all—had to be bland, had to be pureed, and no hot foods, no spaghetti sauce, no heavy seasonings, and Flora was super’ cooperative and cooked for me and kept me on it. And this is what cured the ulcer and got rid of it.

During this time in 1941, September eighth, our first child was born, Richard Leroy, Jr. He was born at Saint Alphonsus Hospital [Boise] and was a good, healthy baby. And he brought a lot of joy into our life and Flora was a super perfect mother. We had a terrible time with him; he didn’t want to eat. My dad used to say, “Don’t worry about it; when he gets ready to eat, he’ll eat.” And he sure does that today, but he got along just fine and we went along into 1942 and on December twenty-fifth our first daughter was born, Mary Kay, on Christmas Day. Flora went to nine o’clock mass. I stayed home with Rich; she came home into the house, and she says, “You’d better get ready to go to the hospital.” So we packed her things together and went to the hospital, and Mary Kay was born at eleven o’clock. She too was a perfect baby. Now Flora had two babies only a year apart, so her hands started to get pretty full.

December 7, 1941, of course, came along and we found ourselves in the war. Cliff Hinckley had been in the National Guard, and so he was called up right away. At that point he was taking care of the club at Lewiston and

the one at Grangeville and also Pendleton. He went on off to the Army, and of course I had to then take that responsibility of taking care of those along with the others. This is where the airplane started to come in very handy because I was able to move about and get along.

I was called up at some point in '41 or '42 by the Army. They'd called me in, examined the X-rays from Mayo brothers, and gave me a physical themselves and found the same evidence, and put me in 4-F [draft classification]. Consequently, I didn't go into the Army at all.

It's amazing how fate plays such a big part in a person's life. If I hadn't had the ulcer (at the time that I had it, I was very disgusted about it), I would have been in the Army for sure. And I don't really believe it would have been possible to have held the business that I'd built up together. And surely I wouldn't be where I am today if I did return from the Army.

Cliff Hinckley, by the same token, he did serve in the Army and was gone all during the war. I ran the business for him, and he had all those profits to come home to while he was in the Army. So, fate played a big part in his life too.

During the war years, naturally there were shortages of lots of things. We were on a point system on food on certain things—flour, and sugar, things like that. You had to take your ration cards with you when you went to get various foods. I don't think it ever bothered us, our living or anybody, as far as that goes. You just drop back a little bit and live went along with it.

There was—in Boise at that time there was a cigar store that also had a big pool room called Hemmingway and Moser. They were out of Salt Lake City. They had quite a few stores around. There was a young man

working there by the name of Lee Winn. I knew Lee because I had machines and pinballs in Hemmingway and Moser, and I picked him as being a possibility of being a good employee, talked to him about going to work for me, and actually ended up leasing a corner store in Boise directly across the street from where Hemmingway and Moser was. And we put in a place called The Pub. This was a beer parlor with pin games and punch boards, cigars, cigarettes, no liquor or food. Lee and I opened The Pub on September fifteenth, 1942. It was a very successful place, and Lee went on, as I'll explain later, to be my partner in quite a few different businesses, as we started getting bigger and moving from one to another.

It was at just about this time, I believe, I'm not positive of the date, but I think it was, that I bought my first Navion airplane. This was a low-wing, very sharp-looking plane. The top part of the cockpit slid back and you climbed in up over the wing to get into it. It was a four-place plane, flew at a hundred and forty miles an hour. It was all aluminum, a beautiful airplane at that period in time. It became a real workhorse for me; it allowed me to go out into Twin Falls or up to Lewiston or Coeur d'Alene or Pendleton, take care of my business and come home the same day, whereas to go up into north Idaho would involve two days of driving. There's no way that I could have done what I did in expanding the various businesses had I not had the airplane.

In February of 1943, Lee Winn and I, we put in the Challenger; this was a beer parlor close—very close to the Hotel Boise, again with pin games and punch boards and things like that. We also bought the Brunswick Cigar Store in Twin Falls, Idaho. This was in September of '43. They had some card games, rummy and pinochle, plus fishing tackle, cigars, cigarettes, and food. Lee was also in

with me in the Brunswick. This was the same year that we—Flora and I decided to buy a house at McCall, Idaho. McCall was located directly north of Boise on Payette Lake, about a hundred and ten miles north of Boise. This house was built right on the lake and it had been made from railroad ties. The Brown Tie and Lumber Company made railroad ties, and the “seconds” they would sell to make houses from. And this house was constructed with the railroad ties. They would saw a groove in the top and bottom of each tie, and they were held together with a spline that went through them. We spent our summers at McCall from this time on and provided a great place for the children to grow up. We had lots of parties. This was another place that the airplane became extremely handy to me because many days I would fly to north Idaho, take care of business, come back to McCall or I would fly to Twin Falls, take care of business, come back, be back for dinner. No other way could I have done this. I might stop in Boise on the way. By this time, Rich was three years old, and as the children got older and years—oh, along in ’46, ’7, ’8, ’9, along in there, many times when I went to Boise, I would take them down and leave them with my mother and father; they’d spend the day with them, and I’d pick ’em up and bring ’em back to McCall in the evening. The house in McCall was—we had it until we moved to Nevada. I assume it still exists. It must; it’d be almost impossible to demolish it, the way it was built. It was built so tight that we had to open doors to start a fire in a fireplace.

The airport at McCall, incidentally, I might speak a little bit about that, was five thousand foot elevation. It was quite dangerous, particularly to take off in the late afternoon. This I would never do; I took off in the morning, early, came back in after it had cooled down in the evening.

I had mentioned that Lee Winn and I bought the Brunswick Cafe in Twin Falls. This was actually the first place that we bought between Lee and I, other than the Saratoga Club in Caldwell which I owned myself, which had food in it. We later on bought other places that had food, and this presented a problem which I’ll explain a little bit later.

I wanted to go back and add a few things. One place that I neglected to mention that I had was the Club Royal in Boise. This was a small club in the Owyhee Hotel in Boise. It was at first just a beer bar, and then later on I remodeled the area just below it in the basement, and we had a locker club down there just like the Congress Club and of course had slot machines. It was much the same type of club as the Congress Club and had its own membership and gathering of local people and businessmen came there almost daily. There was quite a long period of time that we used to eat lunch in the club in the basement, and a very colorful colored waiter would always serve us. He was a big tall chap and extremely funny. I used to give him a lot of my clothes—did for year, even after I moved to Nevada I sent him clothes. And one time he said to me, he said, “Mr. Graves, one thing ah can sure say, you and I is two of the best dressed men in town.” [Spoken in Negro dialect] His name was Andy Brown. I understand he’s still living; he’s lost a leg. I really should go see him, I guess, when I’m in Boise sometime.

During this period when we had these places, it was difficult to get beer. And I made a trip to Mexico and made a contact down there and shipped beer up by the carload into Boise. It was called Polo Beer. It really wasn’t much of a beer, but it did satisfy a lot of people and gave us beer when lots of places didn’t have it. I also bought beer from a chap in Fallon [Nevada] who I had become acquainted with;

Jack Connors I believe his name was, and he had the distributorship for Tahoe Beer which was made in Carson City. So we shipped lots of that beer into Idaho during those years.

At the time that I had the Club Royal in the Owyhee Hotel (this was also during a period, of course, that we had the pinball machines), and at that time Flora's brother Vince was working with me in the pinball business. Somewhere along the line, I had seen a machine—a little machine or gadget, as you might call it, that was called a "moneymaking machine." Well, between Vince and I we ended up making one of these machines, and it was a very simple type machine that has been used by a lot of con artists all over the country for years. You load the machine with real currency, new, and then you—in order to pull the con job, you'd have to have somebody as a confederate of yours and of course you have to have the sucker. And we had loads of fun with this machine. Some of it really not so funny as it turned out.

One particular experience was that there was a peddler, as we called 'em in those days. We had lots of peddlers that stayed at the Owyhee Hotel—salesmen. A fellow by the name of Green, he was a tall fellow, tall as I am, even a little taller maybe, heavy fella, and I had shown him this machine, and we decided to pull the deal on a fellow by the name of Stevenson who was a candy salesman out of Seattle. Well, to do this properly it takes a lot of buildup, and the way we generally would work it was we'd be having some drinks at the bar and Steve would show up, and Green would casually mention to Steve that I had this fantastic machine that would make money. Then he would ask me if it would be possible for me to show it to Steve. I would act like I didn't know what he was talkin' about and change the subject and beat around the bush and all that. The end result was that I would get

mad at Green for having told Stevenson about the machine, and that this could cause me a lot of trouble and everything. So then eventually we let Steve in on it. After much discussion and promise of secrecy, why I would agree to show the machine to Steve. We already had planted the machine in a room in the hotel; I'd hidden it under the bed, and we would go up into the room and I'd close the blinds and close the drapes and look in the bathroom and lock the door and close the transom, and then go into a great dissertation of swearing Steve to secrecy, explaining that this machine I never intended to use in any way, shape, manner, or form. It was just—I didn't need it now, but if sometime later on I needed it, why maybe I might turn some money out on it.

We would load the machine with new twenty-dollar bills, and find bills where the borders are not even. So we would find a bill that wasn't even and put it on a papercutter or a real sharp pair of scissors and cut it at an angle from— on the long side of the bill, so that you'd cut a sixteenth of an inch off at one end and bring it right down to the point of the other, and do the same thing on the other side in the opposite way. This makes it look like the bill has been printed on the paper crooked. Actually the paper is crooked, but when it comes out of the machine, it looks like the printing is crooked. This would be the last bill that you'd load in the machine. You turned some knobs, loaded the machine with four or five new twenty-dollar bills, and the last one in would be this one that was printed crooked. So after all this preparation, which involved quite a few hours, all pledged to secrecy and everything, we finally showed the machine to Steve and ran one bill off. Well, the bill comes off, and I take it and inspect to see if the ink's dry—I rub my finger on it. And then I say, "Oh, my gosh, I got the paper in crooked." I think I forgot to say that you would feed a

piece of white paper into the machine, and as the white paper went in, the new bill would come out, looking like it had been printed right in the machine. So when I saw that it was crooked, I would just tear it up because I'd say, "This one's no good; I don't want to get it mixed up with my own money." So I'd tear it up and throw it in the wastebasket, and I'd say, "I'll run you off another one." So then I'd run another one off, and I'd say, "Now, compare this one with one of your bills." Well, he'd look at it, and of course it looked like a hell of a good bill, which of course it was.

Steve wanted to buy some of the bills right away, and I said, "Well, no, I wouldn't sell any of the bills." I didn't want to use it; there was no way I wanted to use it. So, of course then to really cinch the deal, I would leave the bill in the wastebasket for quite a while, and then all of a sudden say, "Oh, my gosh, I'd better get rid of that bill." I'd go into the bathroom and flush the toilet, and he assumed, of course, that I'd flushed it down the toilet. This, Steve in particular said—well, this was rather dangerous because Boise sewage ran right into the Boise River, and somebody'd be finding this bill. I said, "By golly, yes, I better be careful about that." With this they left, and I proceeded to forget all about it.

One day I get a call from Green, and he said, "We're in a hell of a fix." He said, "Stevenson took this thing hook, line and sinker. He's way up in the Elks Club in Seattle—they've got slot machines, they handle quite a bit of money. He figures that he can get rid of a lot of these bills, and he wants to buy bills from you at forty-, fifty-percent discount, and get rid of them—change 'em for new bills up in the Elks Club." And I says, "Well, hell, tell him it's just a big joke."

He says, "I've told him that, but he won't believe me. He thinks I'm cutting him out of the deal." So, I ultimately had to call Steve

myself and convince him that he'd been sort of taken in.

It was always hard for me to understand how people could think that this super simple machine could possibly print money. It shows how greedy some people get. However, it didn't always quite work this way. My attorney at that time was Hamer Budge who later became chairman of the SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission], and Hamer and I chummed around together quite a little bit. And so he knew about the money machine, and we teamed up to pull the joke on Fred Taylor, who at that time was an attorney. We all had offices in the Idaho building in Boise. My office was there, so was Budge's and also Taylor's, so, Hairier came down to my office, and we set the plot. We had already told Fred about this machine. He came down and called Fred; Fred came in, and I got mad at Hamer for having divulged it to Fred and not keeping it secret like I'd asked him to. And he says, "Well, now you know Fred well enough. He isn't gonna tell anybody." And so after great discussion, why, I opened the safe in the office and got out the machine. We went through the routine and pulled it on Fred, and I'd explained to him that of course I wasn't going to use it; I'd just keep it some time in case I went broke or needed some money real badly. And he looked at it, he got white in the face, and he says, "I'm gonna tell you young man, you're gonna get in trouble if you use this machine in any way, shape, manner or torn; and I don't want to ever see it again; I don't want anything to do with it." He turned around and walked out of the office and slammed the door, left Earner and I sitting there [laughing]. And it was weeks before he got over the fact that he'd been taken in.

I also had an experience in Pendleton, Oregon. I had pulled the gag on somebody there. And lo and behold, the next day, the FBI called on me. Well, this shook the hell

out of me, and I said [chuckling], “Hell, it’s just a joke!” And they were—they didn’t take it quite as a joke, and so I went up and finally got the machine and showed it to ‘em. And of course, they thought that I was trying to sell the money and things like that. I finally convinced them I wasn’t, that it was just a joke, and they politely told me not to be using it that way any more. But it did provide a lot of laughs, and I still have the machine in Carson City. I was always gonna build an elaborate one with ink and ratchets and wheels and gears, and something that would really look real, but I never did.

It gave you a great insight into human nature, didn’t it?

Well, oh sure, in order to pull a con game, you have to have greed. In the case of Fred Taylor, the con game wouldn’t work because he didn’t have greed. Incidentally, Fred Taylor later became supreme court judge in Idaho. I think he still is. But any con game in order to be successful has to have the element of greed on the part of the sucker, the one the game is being played on. This happens today even in the case of the poor old ladies that are taken in by the classic “pigeon-drop” business with the con artist saying, “Draw your money out of the bank; I’m a bank examiner, and we want to check—we want to see if this bank is honest. So you draw your money out, and we’ll give it right back to you; you can put it back in.” But, so even the old lady has to have greed in order for this to work. You read constantly in the paper of these things happening, even today.

So, we come to 1944. This year we bought a house at McCall, Idaho. McCall is located a hundred and ten miles, or so, north of Boise on Payette Lake. This was also the year I bought the Waldorf Cigar Store in Nampa. This was a store which had beer, a small lunch

counter, fishing tackle, and a room with eight or ten pool tables. I remodeled it and put in brand new pool tables. It was operated by a man by the name of Ralph Hayes all the time that I owned it, a very loyal, fine gentleman. You could walk off and leave the place for a year and everything’d be intact. He was completely and absolutely honest.

Why did you stock these places with fishing tackle?

Well, it was mainly because when I bought the business, they were there, and it brought in people, into this place. Maybe they bought some beer, maybe they played the pinball machines. It was a profitable item too, because at that time, there were lots of fishing areas around Idaho.

Did you sell fishing licenses?

Fishing licenses, complete—you know—fishing rods, repairs. Particularly in this Waldorf Cigar Store, this Ralph Hayes was quite a fisherman himself, and he even repaired rods, did it more as a hobby, but he did it—people would bring in good fly rods and he would repair them. In fact, I learned how to do it myself and could repair and rewrap with silk thread the rods where the ferrules are tied on a fishing rod. I’ve done quite a bit of that myself, on real good bamboo fly rods. Of course, now it’s practically all spinning reels made out of plastic, but these were made out of bamboo. And where the ferrules went on, you wrapped them with silk thread and then put a heavy lacquer on—over the silk thread and the whole rod was lacquered. This we did and repaired lots of rods in some of these places.

Nineteen forty-four was also the year my brother John was killed at Pecos, Texas in

the Air Force bomber. This, of course, was a very sad thing in our lives, and I've already discussed this.

In 1945, Lee and I took over the Sports Shop in Kimberly [Idaho]. This was another place with food. So, I was gradually getting into places with food; I didn't like the food [service] end of it at all. It was sort of a necessary evil, but I found myself in it. And since I knew nothing about it, I decided I'd better find out something about it, and I hunted around and found a food consultant by the name of George Wenzel. He was from Austin, Texas. He had written quite a few books on the operation of restaurants; he'd written a huge book called the *Wenzel Menu-maker*. And he came in at the enormous fee of a hundred dollars a day, which you can imagine at that time was really enormous for a consultant. And I forget how much time he spent with me. I considered one of the smartest things I ever did in my life was hiring him and bringing him in because he taught me the basic fundamentals of the food business, using top quality products, top quality—the best meat, the best of everything, the best vegetables, the best canned goods, short menus, all about controls and the various phases of the restaurant business. [He] stressed that control was one of the most important things in the restaurant business, the fact that always certain recipes should be used and they should be followed and never changed; all of these basic things I learned from Wenzel on that visit and future visits.

He later on, after I came to Nevada, actually went to work for me at Carson City for some period of time in the food end of the business. Beyond any question or doubt he really instilled into me the basics which led in ensuing years and particularly the later years in Nevada, the success that we enjoyed in the food business, because I followed those things

that I learned from him right to the letter, and they're still being followed basically today by John Ascuaga at the Nugget in Sparks.

This was the year Judy was born, Judith Ann, in Saint Alphonsus Hospital on May tenth. So this made three children now, so we were really pretty busy. Rich was born in 1940, Mary Kay in '42, and Judy in '45. Flora had her hands pretty full at that time, and she was an excellent mother and took fantastic care of them even though I was extremely busy and away an awful lot of the time.

Then Lee and I bought Al's Motel in Mountain Home. This was a small motel; I don't even remember how many units (twenty-five, thirty units, I suppose). And we operated that from '46 to '53. It was also the year that Flora's sister, Bonnie died. This was a great shock to Flora. She had a stroke and in just a very short time, passed away. Her husband was a sheepherder, and of course he was out with the sheep all the time. They had a girl who was about thirteen or fourteen at that time named Felisa, and with the nickname, "Beebe." Beebe came to live with us in 1946 and stayed with us and moved to Nevada with us and eventually graduated from high school and business college and worked in the First National Bank of Nevada in Carson City for quite a few years, and then was married to Sam Savini. They have five children, Kim, Jill, Natalie, Mike, and Victoria, a lovely family. They've all turned out to be very fine—very fine children, and she and Sam have done a fantastic job of raising them, and they're really all just beautiful children. So, we've been very proud of her and think she's done a great job with her family.

During the time that I had the pinballs, punch boards and slot machines operating in Boise, Flora's brother Vince worked for me. He then went into the Army, came out of the Army and when he came back, why, I had an idea that he could put a bar in Pocatello,

Idaho. He and a friend of his, actually another Basque, chap by the name of Mil Aldecoa put in a small locker club with slot machines in the back of a place called Fred's cafe in Pocatello. They did quite a nice business there, and of course, operated it until slot machines were declared unconstitutional. Then my brother and Vince put in a restaurant in downtown Boise called the Royal and went on to operate it strictly as a restaurant and bar. It became very successful. They duplicated the Round House, the steak house that we had in Carson City and Sparks. Frank Green drew some plans for them using the same basic idea, and they called it the Gold Rush Room. It was very successful and both Vince and Ed were doing very well.

One morning at Lake Tahoe, and the date was July 30, 1949, I had been to the post office and a very weird and odd thing happened. Driving home from the post office I could see in my mind, Flora was screaming. I knew this, but it was such a ridiculous thing that I brushed it aside, and yet as I drove in the driveway up to the front door of our Lake house at Tahoe, she was standing outside crying and screaming. (Yet, I had seen this five or six minutes earlier.) She had just found out by phone call from my brother that Vince had been killed in an airplane accident. What happened was that the Chamber of Commerce had sponsored an early morning breakfast in one of the back-country airports. When I say, "back-country," I mean primitive area airports in Idaho, like on the Salmon River or somewhere like that. And it was a fly-in for airplanes out of Boise; a great number of businessmen made the trip. Coming back two planes, each with four people in them, collided and all eight were killed. This was a terrible blow to Flora. It was her only brother, and of course, it was a worse blow to her

mother and father because they'd had kind of a bad situation with having lost Flora's sister, Bonnie, and another sister that was lost as an infant and now to lose Vince was a real tragedy and it took a long time for everybody to get over it.

Ed had an agreement with Vince that if either one died, the surviving partner had the first right to buy the business from the estate and that's what Ed did. He bought The Royal interest out from Vince's estate.

Was Vince married?

Yes, Vince was married and had two children.

Where are the children today?

One—the son is still in Boise in school. Vince's wife is in Boise and the one daughter is working in Denver. I think she works with the mentally retarded. This is the schooling she took as a—took training in this.

Are they married?

Cathy was married, but she's now divorced. John has not married. And his wife [Vince's] has never remarried.

Describe what your family life was like while you were flying over the state. What effect did that have? You must have been away a considerable part of the time. How much time did you devote to the family?

Naturally, I was away quite a little bit of the time, but having the airplane provided, allowed me to come and go and get back to be with my family. In the summertime when I was in McCall, many's the time that I would leave at daylight, got to—maybe I'd stop in

Grangeville, be there a few hours, go on up to Lewiston, stay there, go over to Pendleton, and be home at six, seven o'clock in time for dinner. Sometimes I would go and stay—maybe stay one night. Lots of times I would fly down to Boise in the morning and fly back at night. Many times I took the children with me, one or two of the children would go down, stay at my mother's. This was a great treat for them; they always liked to do this. Naturally, I was away, but when I came home I was home, and I'd drop my business and I was with the family. We always ate dinner as a family; we didn't eat piecemeal, we didn't—some of them eat at one time, some at another; we always had our meal—our evening meal or lunch was always together—was always a family dinner. We still do that. And I think that's very important, extremely important. It's about the only time you really get to sit down and visit and talk with your children. We went on trips, we went here and there, and did things as much as we could in those years. As the children got older we took them on various trips, which I'll get into a little later. But I don't think the children suffered any from my having this extensive a business. Later on after we went to Nevada, I'll explain a little bit how—how I handled this situation, which was somewhat different than when we were in Idaho.

Where was the airplane hangared, or did you have a tie-down location at the Boise airport?

In Boise it was kept at what we called Bradley field. This was a small field owned by the Bradleys who were mining people. It was on Boise River, not anywhere near the present airport, just a small private field. But they had mechanics and did maintenance work, and I flew in and out of Bradley field all the time. And many of the—practically all the people that went into the back country

or used private airplanes, kept their planes at Bradley field. And that's where I met Margaret Pinneo, incidentally, who was secretary for the Bradleys. She later became my secretary, and then moved to Nevada with me, and was my secretary and bookkeeper in Nevada when we first came down. She then met Bob Tillotson, who you'll remember was on the fishing trip with us in Idaho this year; Bob had come down to help me. And they were married in our home in Carson City, then moved back to Boise and went into the real estate business. They've remained our very good friends all through the years.

What did Mr. McConnell, who taught you the ins and outs of flying, say, about maintaining an airplane?

Well, that's drilled into you right along with your flying lessons that an airplane must be checked, you must check it each day, each time you go out you check the flaps, you check the landing gear, you check the ailerons, you have your regular twenty-five-hour checks that the mechanics go through and check a certain number of things; you have your hundredhour checks. Naturally an airplane must be kept in absolute, top running order 'cause you've only got one little old engine holdin' you up up there. And I was flyin' over a lot of rough country, a lot of mountainous country. Fortunately, I never had a forced landing in all the flying that I did do. I don't know how many hours I finally put in. I have a log book in Carson; I don't recall what the total number of hours were, but they were a good many.

How long did your flying career last?

Until shortly after I moved to Nevada in 1954. In fact, I flew the whole family down

in my plane from Boise to Nevada when we made the move down. And they were all small enough so that they could all fit in along with Flora. And then I used it in Nevada for a year or so, and I found out that I wasn't flying it—I'd go three, four, five weeks and not fly it, and then go out and get in it and go somewhere, which was a little bit dangerous because I wasn't keeping up on my flying, I wasn't properly checkin' the plane out, and I didn't really have the use for it. A plane is almost like an automobile, unless you've got a use for it, it's of no value to you whatsoever. It ceases to be a thing just to jump in and fly around in, so at that point I sold it. I often wish that I've gotten into some kind of a business that I needed an airplane because I would have liked to have owned one, but I never did because in Nevada, all my business was close enough together so that I didn't need an airplane. And airplane is only good for what it can do for you; if it can't, it becomes a very expensive toy.

We come now to 1947 and this was the year Joanne was born, Joanne Marie; she was also born in Saint Alphonsus on February twentieth. About this time the laws throughout the state of Idaho changed somewhat, and the private locker clubs were not allowed to have slot machines and somewhere in '47 or '48 there was a law passed called a local option law on slot machines. This allowed incorporated cities to vote whether they would allow the operation of slot machines or not, and they could license the operation of a slot machine. For instance, Boise, Twin Falls, Buhl, all of these places, voted against the operation of slot machines under the local option law. However, Sandpoint voted them in, Coeur d'Alene voted them in. And then there was a small area just outside of Boise that incorporated and called itself Garden City, and they financed the whole operation of the city by the income from slot

machines. They allowed the operation of slot machines and took a percentage of the profits. Lee Winn and I put in a place in Garden City in 1948 called the Circle Inn Cafe. This was a small place with twenty-five, thirty slot machines, very reasonable priced food, very plain, ordinary food, beer, and the place did an enormous business. Extremely big business. There were other places in Garden City at the time. In fact, my brother and Vince subsequently opened a place in Garden City called the Royal and did very well with it. The Adams brothers, Howard and "Hop" and another brother who has since died, had a place there. They presently own the Carson City Nugget.

In 1948 we started building a new home in Boise. This was out on Mountain View Drive. You can well see that we'd sort of outgrown the little house at 2502 Bannock. This house was designed by an architect by the name of Jedd Jones. He was a young architect in the firm of Howard and Hummel, two brothers who had been in Boise for years. We spent a lot of time in the design of this home. It was a large home with six bedrooms, the big living room, a sunroom, dining room, lovely kitchen. I don't remember the actual square footage, but it was a large house. It was built on a piece of property that I had looked at for a long time. It was a funny thing—I tried to buy the property; there was an old—old ranch house on it and some beautiful old trees and an orchard of fruit trees. I talked to the gentleman that owned it, and he said, "Nope," he wouldn't sell it. He said, "If they want to sell it after I die, maybe you can buy it, but I won't sell it." And the day he died, the actual day he died, his son called me and offered it for sale. [Chuckling] And needless to say, I bought it immediately because I liked it—the location was very good and it was beautiful;

it was up on a rim. And the fact that it had these old trees and made a beautiful setting for a home. And the home was designed to fit in—into the property and around the trees, and it was really and truly a lovely home, had a full basement; we had a big recreation room in the basement. It had the latest of everything in it. In fact, I was talking to my son the other day, I said, “I see now they’re advertising real strongly these heat pump systems, which is actually an air conditioner in the summertime, and then it provides heat in the wintertime. This was a system I put in the house in 1948. It was called a heat pump at that time, and it was actually pretty much invented by a local man. It worked reasonably well, but it hadn’t been proved out yet. So later on we changed it over to conventional heating system.” But—so it only took twenty years for ’em to develop and start selling it. [Chuckling] But we had the first one that probably ever was around. It was kind of a Mickey Mouse arrangement, but it actually worked. But it did cause a lot of problems, so I eventually took it out.

What was the view like from that location?

Well, it looked off across to the mountains clear across the valley and then you looked down on the valley, the Boise Valley that went down through. You looked right out over Garden City. And, the only big problem with it was that we had to run a taxi service for the children because where we had been living they could go anywhere on their bikes; here they had to be taken because it was about—oh—at that time it was three, four miles away from any stores or churches or anything like that, and now it’s right in the center of a big living area, big residential area, I should say.

In ’49, early in ’49 I think it was, we moved the Brunswick Cafe and equipment—

any equipment that we could use to Coeur d’Alene, the Brunswick Cafe from Twin Falls. And we moved the Buhl Sports Shop equipment to Sandpoint from Buhl. This was any of the restaurant equipment or bar, the back bar, refrigerated back bar, any of the showcases, anything that could possibly be used up in that area, and of course, we moved the slot machines up because Sandpoint and Coeur d’Alene had passed a local option law that allowed us to legally operate machines.

Both of these clubs were tremendously successful. The manager of the Brunswick in Coeur d’Alene was Bill Webster who had been running the store in Twin Falls. Bill was an extremely good manager and a lot of fun. The cafe opened right up and did nothing but business. We did lots of promotion work; we had an Indian carved that we called “Skookumchuck”—it was in-the cafe. We used this as a logo in a lot of our advertising and all.

Right at this point I should go back and tell about the “Awful-Awful” sandwich. This sandwich was a hamburger sandwich which was actually, shall we say, invented by Bill Webster and myself and the cooks in the Twin Falls; we started it there. It was very successful, so of course, we took this to Coeur d’Alene, and we did a great promotion on the Awful-Awful sandwich. Ran weeks before we opened, we ran little one-inch ads: “What is the Awful-Awful?” “Is the Awful-Awful really awful-awful?” Various ads of that type created an interest in the sandwich, and then on the opening took whole series of pictures of people eating the Awful-Awful. This was a two-patty hamburger, much the same as a Big Mac today, with onions and tomato, mayonnaise and seasoning and all, in it. The only difference between it and the Big Mac is the fact the Big Mac has a piece of bread in the middle. But it was a very, very popular

sandwich; I think it sold for about thirty-five, forty cents in those days. Now I don't know what they get for it. They're still selling it in the Sparks Nugget.

We created a carnival atmosphere in the stores. We would have a special night that would maybe be carnival night, and that night we'd have a barrel—a whole barrel of peanuts in the shells where people could just reach in, take a handful, fill their pockets, do whatever they wanted to. It was just a gimmick. They could throw the shells on the floor. This created a carnival feeling with people, created a loose, happy feeling. We did lots of business in both Sandpoint and Coeur d'Alene with Canadian people. When a jackpot would hit, the bartender would yell "jackpot" and ring a bell, and Bill Webster's office was up above the walk-in box where he could look down on the whole store; he'd holler "jackpot," ring a bell. It created an atmosphere of, again, carnival atmosphere, of feeling—sort of loosened up the crowd, made everybody happy and everybody feel good. We were happy to see somebody win, and we learned also about this time with slot machines that the looser the machine was, the more money it made. Machines in the old days used to be sixty—probably about sixty-, sixty-five-percent return to the player. We gradually got them up to around—some around eighty-six-, eighty-seven-, even up as high as ninety-three-, ninety-four-percent return to the player. A little later on I'll give a concrete example of that, that happened in Carson City.

What kind of bell was rung in this place?

A cowbell. This was a cowbell that we'd ring, just a regular old cowbell. Maybe there'd be three, four of 'em around the store that people would—different—anybody was near

would grab it and ring, you know. Everybody would yell "jackpot," waitress, the bartenders, the manager, I would if I were in the place. It was—it was a great store. About this time, a young man went to work for me by the name of Pete Carr. Pete had had a little experience in the operation of slot machines; he went to work in the—in the Coeur d'Alene store as a mechanic to take care of the slot machines. Pete worked there all those years, then came to the Carson Nugget, worked there, even after I sold it for a couple of years, and then came over to Sparks. He still is at Sparks and is vice-president and general manager right under John Ascuaga today. Very capable man, completely and absolutely honest in every way, and was very loyal to me all through the years.

How was the Awful-Awful named?

I don't really know how—I can't recall how that came about. I perhaps could check up somewhere and find out how we named it the Awful-Awful. I suppose it was just—somebody said, "Boy, that looks awful, looks like it's an awful-awful," or something and the name just sort of evolved.

To elaborate a little further on Skookumchuck. This was a little squatty Indian, that was carved by Thane Robertson from Boise as sort of a advertising gimmick and theme for the Brunswick Cafe in Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint. Thane carved the Indian in Boise, and then it was flown to Coeur d'Alene on Empire Airlines, and was met by the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and Bill Webster, the manager, and the managers of—local managers of the Empire Airlines. We had newspaper stories on it at that time, and they allowed Skookumchuck to fly up on—at half fare.

I have some menus from Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint. They're both the same menu

for the two towns [turns pages of menu as he speaks]. Some prices on them that—of course, coffee was only five cents. I see we have “name the Indian contest.” It was an all expense—the prize was an all-expensepaid trip at Sun Valley for two for one week, and that’s of course where the name Skookumchuck came from. Fresh fruit in season was 20 cents, fresh orange juice, 20 cents; ham, bacon and sausage, 40 cents; waffles, 30 cents; hot cakes, 25 cents; one side order of one egg, 20 cents; T-bone steak, \$2.25; pies from our own bakery, 15 cents (a la mode, 25 cents); Brunswick hamburger, 25 cents. And for some reason I don’t see the Awful-Awful on this particular menu; I don’t know whether we’d even introduced it yet. But it sold for 45 cents at that time.

Here’s a Thanksgiving Day menu that I’ll read some prices off of. This was a choice of tomato juice or fruit cocktail, ripe olives with celery hearts, Waldorf salad, chicken consore, French dumplings, roast stuffed turkey with giblet gravy, cranberry sauce, or baked Virginia ham with fruit sauce, buttered peas, pumpkin or hot mince pie—\$1.75 which is not bad. Then on the first anniversary of the Brunswick Cafe in Coeur d’Alene, we had a big promotion. We rolled back prices to 1939. And here are the prices (everything was 39 cents, most everything): it was Salisbury steak, 39 cents; chicken fried steak, halibut cuts, breaded pork cutlets, chicken and noodles, stew, chef’s salad, all of them for 39 cents. Coffee, tea, milk or buttermilk, 5 cents; cake, 10 cents; pie, 10 cents (pie a la mode, 15 cents); ice cream, 10 cents; hamburger, 10 cents; cheeseburger, 15 [cents]; grilled cheese, 9 cents; bacon and tomato, 19 cents. Needless to say, we had a full house that day.

Both the Brunswick Cafes at Coeur d’Alene and Sandpoint continued to do a large business. I don’t think that I mentioned

that Dud Dillingham, who had been a pilot for me, was the manager of the Brunswick at Sandpoint. He did an excellent job there, and the volume there was a little bit less than Coeur d’Alene, but it was still an extremely good business. I remember one time in Sandpoint, I was up there myself, and there were some Canadian people in playing the machines. A machine hit a jackpot, dropped twenty coins, but of course then you would pay the balance off over the counter. If it were a five-dollar jackpot, you would have gotten four dollars over the counter. And the person grabbed the money, put it in his pocket, and ran down the street. I ran out after him and got him and brought him back and gave him the balance of the money. But he didn’t understand the machine; he thought as long as he’d won this, he ought to get out of there. But he was extremely happy coming back in with money.

Dillingham and Webster used to play lots of tricks between each other, lots of gags back and forth. The two towns were fairly close together. They went on for many years operating these places for us until—actually until they closed ’em in 1953. This of course goes to the point when they declared the local option law unconstitutional, which I’ll get into later on. Dud Dillingham moved down to Carson City with me when we moved to Nevada. Bill Webster decided to stay in Coeur d’Alene; we made him an extremely good price on the Brunswick Cafe and sold it to him. He went on to run it for quite a few years, and then his son ran it. And he continued to make a living out of it just as a restaurant without-machines. He was a good operator. And one funny thing, he was always doing some kind of crazy stunt— one that was about the craziest I’ve ever heard of was every Saint Patrick’s Day he would have his hair bleached and died green. You have to be

a little bit dippy to do that, but he was dippy, and he was a tremendous manager. He later became an Idaho state legislator, and presently is the manager in charge of the—all the liquor stores in Idaho, and doing an excellent job.

I might mention at this time the tremendous relationship that Lee Winn and I had all through the years. Partnerships are generally never any good; they always break up or always have problems. We went through all the years that we were in business with no serious arguments. Lee was extremely loyal in every way, completely and absolutely honest. He worked hard, I think, probably the reason that we got along so well was that he was quite happy to have me more or less be the leader. By that I don't mean that he never came up with any ideas or anything like that. We would have problems on something to solve and we would simply sit down and between the two of us, we'd work it out. He'd come up with an idea and if it was workable, we'd use it. If I wanted—if I had an idea, he'd be agreeable to it and we'd use it. It was a beautiful relationship; we never grumbled about who was working longer hours or any of our expenses or anything like that. I don't know of any time in all the years that we were partners that we had any serious breakdown in relations. And this is saying something because all my life I've seen partnerships break up. I really have always been against having a partnership, but this was one that really worked and was extremely advantageous to both of us.

I'd like to recount something that happened during the time that I had the Congress Club along in (this would have been '35) '36, '7, '8, '9, along in there sometime. I naturally often went over and visited with Otto Heuck. And, he had a friend that used to visit him occasionally from California. His name was Gene Carrothers. He was a tall, very distinguished looking gentleman.

And he had been associated with gambling in the Palm Springs area. This was when they had gambling in some places in California, not legal; it was always illegal. However, he worked in a place in which gambling was completely honest in every way and nobody was ever cheated. He knew that I was in the machine business and that I was running the Congress Club. And one day he said to me, "Son," he said, "I want to tell you something," and he said, "if you'll remember and practice it all the time that you're in business, whether it's this business or any other business," he says, "you'll make more money than you can ever spend and enjoy.

And I said, "What was that?"

He said, "Just remember that you've got to send out winners to get players." And then he went on to elaborate on it, that there was no way that you could cheat the public; the public was too smart, and that they would find out that something was wrong and that they would not come back. If the odds on the slot machine were too tight, they'd quit playing them. I remembered this all my life and actually used this slogan (in the Nuggets in Carson and Sparks, after we came to Nevada), "You've got to send out winners to get players." And we practiced that in every phase of the operation, even in the food. We gave the very best quality we knew how to give. The meat was always choice or better; there were never any second-rate products used, so consequently we were continually sending out winners, sending out people to tell other people that the Nugget was a good place to eat in, the Nugget was a good place to gamble in. I think that this was probably one of the best pieces of advice I ever got in my life.

One other thing this same man told me—I came over one night to the Waldorf and I'd had some problem with the bartender

at the Congress Club; he [Gene Carrothers] was there visiting with Otto, and I was complaining about this bartender. And this same fella reached over and grabbed ahold of my shirt—he was standing on the outside of the bar right alongside me—he reached over and grabbed ahold of my shirt and kinda pulled me up to him, and he said, “Listen if that bartender had as much sense as you want him to have, you’d be working for him and he’d be working for you.” So that taught me a very valuable lesson, that you could—you couldn’t expect too much from many employees, because if you wanted them to be that good, maybe you’d be working for them. And I didn’t exactly want to do that.

In 1950, we opened another place in Garden City and called it the Last Chance Cafe. It was much the same as—as the Circle Inn, a little bit larger, had thirty-five, forty slot machines in it—food, beer, whiskey—did a real fine business, just as much business as the Circle Inn. All of these places continued to operate through ’50, ’51 and ’52. We—everything went real smoothly; they were all operating well. We had normal problems that you always have with some employees, but as a general rule they were operating very well.

Sometime in 1952, there was an action filed. I don’t at the moment have the names of who filed the action, but they filed an action to test the constitutionality of the local option law which legalized slot machines in cities that wanted to have them. And the supreme court declared that particular law unconstitutional, and it became effective January 1, 1953. Thus, one day I had a thriving superbusiness, making nothing but money, and the next day I was out of business. It was a real tough blow. Here I was with a wife and four children and a big, new house, an airplane, and a whole series of businesses, eight or ten at the time. At this point they’re not worth hardly anything.

They could continue to operate as restaurants and all, but I made the decision that I was gonna sell and move to Nevada. I flew down to Nevada, did some checking around, and there was a chap in Boise by the name of Jim Kelley. Actually he operated over in eastern Idaho, but I knew him. And he knew about a place in Reno that might be for sale. I’ll go into more details on that later, but I actually went down and went in partners with him, and then moved down, but we’ll discuss that a little bit later.

During the years when we had the home in McCall, Idaho, there was a lodge called the Shore Lodge located in McCall which was owned by Cliff Hinckley. Cliff Hinckley was the man that I was in partners with in Lewiston, Grangeville, and Pendleton, Oregon. And this is actually where I met Cliff Hinckley was in the Shore Lodge and then he also used to come into the Congress Club quite often. Along about 1949, ’50, ’51, in the Shore Lodge was a young chap who was going to school at the time by the name of John Ascuaga and he was working at the lodge as a bellman. We used to get down to the lodge for dinner quite often, and we became acquainted. Of course, we became acquainted with him for the reason of the fact that his parents were very good friends of my wife’s parents, because they were Basque, and they had known them in the old country and of course knew them in Idaho. They lived in Caldwell, Idaho at the time.

John was a pleasant, energetic, eager-beaver type of fellow with lots of personality and always extremely pleasant and happy to see you and always remembered your name. So we knew him, would see him, knew that he was going to school, would visit with him. Somewhere along the line, I would say in—sometime in ’51, I made him a proposition to go to work for me when he got out of school.

He was going to Washington State University at Pullman, Washington, and he agreed to do this. He actually started to work in February of 1952, and he came directly from Pullman down to Coeur d'Alene and went to work in Coeur d'Alene in the capacity of being in charge of food in all of the places that I owned at that time. He did an extremely good job, and along about this time is when we brought George Wenzel in. We—between us we really learned what the food business was all about. He [John Ascuaga] later came down to Nevada with me in 1953 when they outlawed machines in Idaho. We'll go on with more about John as the story progresses.

Here was a very interesting experience that happened at McCall. This was at the time that I was associated with Lee Winn, and he and his wife Bessie were up at McCall one day, one weekend, I should say. So, Lee and I decided to pull a little trick on Flora. I don't know whether you've heard of it, it's the classic old "snipe hunt" story. And so Lee got talking about snipes, and he was talking to me about it and Flora overheard the conversation and said, "Well, what are snipes?"

And he says, "Well, haven't you ever seen one?"

And she said, "No."

And he said, "Well, they generally just come out at night. They're a small bird that come out at night and fly around like—somewhat like bats do." He said, "They're very difficult to catch, but you can catch them." And so he said, "Why don't we see if we can catch one tonight," he said, "I know they're around."

So he said, "That I need is a big, a big sack, like a flour sack." So we didn't have any flour sacks, so Flora took an old sheet and sewed it up so it was like a flour sack. So we went out into the pine trees and woods in back of our

house in McCall, pitch black, and had Flora holding the sack and told her that we'd go out and herd these—chase these snipes and as they came along her way, if she'd hold the sack, they'd fly right into it. So we left her holding the sack and then we circled around, went back in the house. [Laughing] Well, there was the poor thing sitting out there holding the sack, all by herself, scared to hell of the dark. Finally, it dawns on her what had happened, and she came in the house and was ready to—to kill us, I'll guarantee you that. Really it ended up being a big joke, but it wasn't funny to her at the time, for sure.

In a letter that I recently received from Lee just this last year [picks up letter from coffee table and reads from it], he says in it: "Flora, I just heard something that I confidentially want to pass on to you. Please, I repeat, please don't let anybody know about it. There is a place about ten miles from where you lived that simply abounds with snipes. If you cannot remember the procedure, write me and I shall spell it out in great detail."

Comment on a few of these items I've found in my research. From the Twin Falls Times-News of January 1, 1954, an item about Attorney General Robert Smylie. "The supreme court of Idaho declares slot machines and all other similar contrivances illegal, included are pinball, punch boards, chance spindles, and chance prize games, Bingo, Keno, and "fascination" games. Possession is not a crime, but they are contraband and subject to seizure. Owners have two choices, destroy them or send them to Nevada."

What year was this?

This was New Year's Day, 1954, and this excerpt from an article appeared in the Twin Falls Times-News.

Needless to say, I took Governor Smylie's advice and shipped them to Nevada, namely the slot machines, and everything else that we couldn't sell or get rid of in Idaho. This was a tremendous blow at the time because you can well imagine with nine or ten places operating, all doing topnotch business; so I was in business one day and the next day I was out of business. The businesses one day were worth hardly anything. When he speaks of chance spindles, this is a chance game similar to punch boards. These are little numbers that were attached to a spindle and you would pay so much and pull them off. Fascination was a game somewhat similar to Bingo, played with balls with numbers on them. He's included all of these to cover everything.

The allied civic forces were very active throughout Idaho, particularly in the Boise area, and they're the ones that brought the action which declared the operation of slot machines in Idaho illegal. So, like it or not, I was out of business. So I had a wife and four children, a home which was a large home that I'd built and had only lived in a couple years, so what to do? So, I made the decision to move to Nevada. Naturally, throughout the years, I'd been down to Nevada a number of times, so I knew a little bit about it. And also I, fortunately, decided along with Lee Winn to put all of the places up for sale at very reasonable figures, on most any type of terms. Several places we sold with no money down at all, with small payments, and surprisingly enough they all paid out. One place we sold to one of the managers; this was in Coeur d'Alene; I think I mentioned this before; the Brunswick was sold to Bill Webster. He went on to operate it and later on, his son, and made a good living out of it for quite a few years. Incidentally, we sold to him with no money down and no contract whatsoever. So there we were out of business, and I came

down to Nevada. I had over the years become acquainted with a chap by the name of Jim Kelley, who was in the same business as I was in Idaho Falls. He found a place in Reno that was for sale; it was right across from Harolds Club, the Picadilly, and I went in with him and we bought this place and remodeled it, and on March eleventh, 1954, opened the Reno Nugget with Jim Kelley. Just prior to that on February twenty-eighth, I personally opened the Nugget in Yerington. This was in the place that had been called the Eagle Cafe. And during this time we made negotiations for a location in Carson City—I should say I made negotiations for a place in Carson City, and this was with—in a restaurant and bar that was closed at the time. It was right in the block just next to the post office on Carson Street, and it was called Broderick's Cafe. It was owned by an Ella Broderick. She had operated that at One time with gambling in it, and it had been somewhat unsuccessful and she had closed it.

To back up a little bit, we immediately shipped all of the machines out of Idaho and put them in storage in Nevada because they became contraband in Idaho. And then also shipped quite a quantity of equipment down, not all at once, but from time to time, as we needed it. It came out of some of the places that we closed. All of the places we didn't sell, for instance, the one in Sandpoint wasn't sold, we moved all that equipment down. So we had lots of restaurant equipment, bars, back bars, refrigeration equipment, sinks, a myriad of things that were hauled down to Nevada and many of them were used.

To go back to the Reno Nugget, this was my first encounter with an architect by the name of Frank Green, who in ensuing years played a very important part in my life and helped me immensely in many, many ways. He helped redesign the Nugget in Reno, and

of course, at approximately that same time, 'cause they were open just a few days apart, the one in Carson City. I extremely well remember in Carson City after we had secured the lease on this building, it was, incidentally, just forty feet wide—forty feet by eighty feet deep; one-half of it was a restaurant, the other half was a bar with enough room for a few machines and a couple of—three “21” tables. Frank came over with me to look at the place, and I had a contractor there at the time by the name of Sture Svensen. Frank had a yellow pad with him, a five-by-seven-[inch] yellow pad, and he talked to Sture and made the, what I call, the original plans and specifications for the Carson Nugget on one sheet of this five-by-seven yellow pad. It's always been a great regret of mine that somewhere along the line this got lost. So he just pointed his finger and “we'll do this and we'll do that,” and the Carson Nugget was put together in a very short time and opened, as I said, on March eighth.

I look back now and I wonder how I could have done this. On February twenty-eighth I opened Yerington; March eleventh, opened Reno; March eighth, opened Carson City; so I was pretty busy.

The Carson Nugget took right off. It was very surprising to me because Carson was a pretty sleepy little town; there wasn't much business in town. John was in there takin' care of the food at that time, both in Reno and in Carson (by John I mean Ascuaga). We took the slot machines that had come down from Idaho and had them rebuilt by some people in Las Vegas, and they were put in new cases, new cabinets, a later cabinet than what—in other words, the mechanism was taken out of the old cabinet and put in a new one. We built new stands for the machines. And something happened that really taught me a lesson, a very great lesson, right at this time. We were

short one new machine when we went to fill the stands, so I said, “Well, let's take one of the old ones and put it up anyway,” because it was licensed. And this was an old, what they called a Mills “Black Cherry” machine. It had been repainted yellow and was all chipped and—an awful-looking old thing, but it just happened to have about a ninety-two- or ninety-three-percent payout mechanism in it. This machine went up and in no time at all it was making more money than any machine we had. This taught me that you cannot fool the customer; he knows when a machine is loose and when it's paying out enough and when it isn't. He doesn't know how he knows this, but he just inadvertently knows it. This machine we kept for years in the Carson Nugget, and I even had another mechanism made with the same reel assembly on it, the same percentage, so that we could—when the one got into bad condition, we could take it out, put the new one in, keep the machine in operation all the time. It really proved to me that the looser the machine, the more money you make and that you can't fool “John Q. Public.”

The Carson Nugget was operated at that time by a man by the name of Dud Dillingham, who I have mentioned before who had been my pilot in Idaho. He had also operated the Sports Shop in Caldwell, Idaho. Dud had a tremendous personality; everybody in town took to him right away and they thought a great deal of him. We started out with lots of promotion, unusual types of things. One was “Country Store Night.” Everybody would dress in bib overalls, straw hats (this was every employee in the place); we would have a barrel of peanuts—big fifty-gallon barrel full of peanuts in the shell. People could eat them and throw the shells right on the floor. We would have drawings for maybe turkeys, maybe hams, maybe grocery—bags of groceries, boxes of groceries, all kinds of

different things, special prices on drinks, some special menu item that day, anything to be something different and create a carnival atmosphere and a good feeling within the place. The Carson Nugget took right off, it did—just did a tremendous business. I can't remember how many table games we opened with; I think we had a wheel and maybe two or three "21s." They did reasonably well. It seemed like the slot machines were the long suit there and they seemed to do better business.

The same year in June, on June first, I purchased what was known as the Gabler building. This was a twenty-fivefoot building adjoining the Nugget on the south side which would be the post office side, and I immediately expanded into the Gabler building. This was into the front part of the Gabler building. The Gabler building didn't go clear back the full eighty feet, so we just expanded in and made a larger casino. July fifth, only thirty-four days later, I leased, with an option to purchase, the Miller building which was on the other side of the Nugget. All of this was done because of the fact that the place was so full of people all the time that I just needed more room.

During this time the Reno Nugget was doing fairly well. The Yerington Nugget was doing some business, making some money, but not doing as good as the Carson Nugget.

Things happened pretty fast in Carson in those days in '54. Seemed like I was remodeling constantly. And then in July of '54, I entered into a deal in Las Vegas and purchased an eight-percent interest in the Westerner Club in downtown Las Vegas. The other stockholders were a man by the name of Giorgetti from San Francisco; he was the principal stockholder, and then a man by the name of Joe Hart who had owned the company—the Gem State Novelty Company

in Boise that Harold Pepple managed. Harold Pepple was also a stockholder, there were eight or ten other stockholders who worked within the place.

I would fly down there from time to time, and this place was right on the main street in downtown Las Vegas. And I kept my interest in the Westerner until the first stockholders' meeting which was on January 14, 1955, just the next year. And I attended this stockholders' meeting, and there was so much bickering and conflict of interest and confusion and name-calling and everything else, I told them that I wanted to sell out. And I forget now, several of them went together and bought my stock out for the same price I'd paid for it. And I was very happy to get out of there because the place eventually failed. They had constant problems mainly because of having too many partners all with their own ideas as to how it should be run.

Was that on Fremont Street?

Yes, on Fremont and right down—downtown Las Vegas.

What is at that location now?

I don't really know. Some other club, but I don't know what it is now.

We received a great deal of publicity about the success of the Carson Nugget. Everybody, of course, didn't believe that the place could even exist and yet it took right off—and did big business. There were some other small clubs in Carson City at the time, but for some reason they just didn't seem to do business. One main reason was that our machines were different variety of reel assemblies and the percentage of payoffs were high enough plus we had a good food operation. This we had learned in Idaho through George Wenzel,

and I had John Ascuaga overseeing it at that time. So we watched the food as closely as we watched anything else in the whole operation.

One thing happened about this time that meant quite a bit to me and the Nugget, and that was an editorial in the August 20, 1954 issue of *Territorial Enterprise* by Lucius Beebe. It was entitled the “Return of the Bonanzas.” And I will read it to you:

Every now and then some solon from the more distant sage rises in the zoo when legislature is sitting in Carson to propose that only ‘native’ Nevadans, whatever that means, be permitted to own, operate and finance gaming establishments in the Silver State. The ostensible idea is to prevent such matters from falling into the hands of ‘foreign interests’ with the suggestion that ‘foreign interests’ from some other state of the Union have about them some dubious aspect.

The best current example of what ‘dubious foreign capital’ can do for a community is in Carson City itself, a community of great charm and background which over the years has resolutely been attempting to commit suicide. It allowed its judicial chambers to be removed elsewhere, it took no heed when its railroad was stolen and sold for junk, it concertedly resisted all and any attempts of interested persons to revive some of its historic atmosphere and past glory. Carson wanted nothing of any sort of enterprise except to bitch when somebody else showed any.

Some ‘foreigners’ from far-off Idaho, and you’d think it was Upper Assam to hear tell it, have taken over Carson with a great big, wonderful

and intelligently run gaming saloon that has put the town back on the financial and economic map for the first time since staging days. The Nugget has simply saved the state capital from going down the drain to complete oblivion. More money passes through the local bank than has been seen in fifty years; more tourist trade is beguiled from the highway and their money put in useful circulation in Nevada than can be recalled by the oldest inhabitant. The Nugget, far from eliminating competition in Carson, has brought in so much business that every other establishment at that end of town is feeling a substantial life in its business.

If this can be contrived the days of the bonanzas are far from over.

Of course, this was a big boost, and I reprinted this editorial in newspapers all over the state, even in California newspapers. I reprinted on newsprint, headed up at the top of the reprint, “Here is what they say about the Nugget in Carson City,” and then reprinted the editorial with the *Territorial Enterprise* masthead at the top of it. We distributed these around the Nugget; I mailed them out in various mailing deals, and sort of just retold this story so that it was way more effective than just from the circulation of the *Territorial Enterprise*. You can do all the advertising you want yourself and you can tell how great you are, but there’s nothing like having somebody else tell how great you are. And this really told what the Carson Nugget was doing, and there had been a lot of resistance when we went into Carson; they—they didn’t like the idea of people coming down from Idaho and opening a saloon, as Lucius Beebe calls it.

Then did you first meet Lucius Beebe?

Oh, I met him sometime after that. I think it was—I don't really know. He used to come in the Nugget; I never knew him before that time, but after this, of course he used to come in the Nugget and then I'd visit with him from time to time. He was, of course, a very colorful character in Virginia City and San Francisco and the whole West, for that matter. Had his own private railroad car, and for years ran the *Territorial Enterprise*. And it was a super colorful newspaper in the days that he ran it.

Tell me who Mr. Beebe would bring into the Carson Nugget with him on his visits?

Oh, he had many friends, and of course he was generally with Charles "Chuck" Clegg who was with him practically all the time. He always had his big Saint Bernard dog with him that he called "T-Bone," and we'd always have to get him some bones for him to take home.

Along about that time a fella came along and had—said he had a gold collection that he wanted to sell me. Well, I didn't particularly want to buy a gold collection and then finally he offered to rent it to me, and I did rent it. He was from over in the Sonora country in California. And this was quite a nice gold collection, and I ultimately bought it and put it on display and called it the "Fifty-ThousandDollar Gold Collection" in the Carson Nugget. And unfortunately when I sold the Nugget, I sold the collection along with it. I kind of wish that I'd hung onto it some way. The Adams brothers that have the Carson Nugget now have enlarged it and made a very beautiful display for it, and it's a real drawing card at the Carson Nugget today, especially since the Nugget's situated just kitty-corner from the state museum.

We played "Blackout Bingo" in the Carson Nugget. This was done with Bingo cards on which you don't have to place a coin, but you slide a little window that—a little tab that covers the number as it is called. So these cards would be sold all through the Nugget each night at say, ten o'clock, ten-thirty, something like that. And we would have what we call "Blackout Bingo" which meant that the first person to cover his complete card would win. We would start calling at, I believe, fifty-two numbers, and the prize would be say, at that time, I suppose maybe five hundred dollars; and then we'd draw fifty-two numbers for ten days and then raise the price to, maybe, seven hundred dollars, and raise the number drawn to fifty-three, which would qualify for winning the big prize. This meant that everybody in the house could play the Bingo, and we used it more as a drawing card and generally tried to figure out the prizes so we were paying out approximately what we were taking in on it.

I remember one interesting thing that happened, to show you how friendly and the type of place that the Carson Nugget was. There was a couple that had a restaurant down at Genoa called the Bonanza. Their names were Jinny and Halvor Smedsrud. I remember the first time I went down to this restaurant, I'd heard about it, so we went down to eat one night, and the sign out in front said, "Continental Cuisine." And I thought, "Holy cow, continental cuisine down here in Genoa, Nevada, how can this be?" But it was truly continental cuisine because Jinny had been raised and schooled in France, and she did the cooking and Halvor took care of the bar. It was a small restaurant, a short menu, but everything was excellent.

Well, Halvor and Jinny used to get up practically every night to play Blackout Bingo. And one night they called— we were calling

I think at that time fifty-six numbers, and of course, at fifty-six numbers, why, the big prize could go most any night. Well, Halvor and Jinny had been playing, night after night, and here it was almost time for the bingo game and they hadn't been able to close up their restaurant yet and drive from Genoa to Carson City. So they called and wanted to know if I'd hold up the game? They said they—they didn't want to miss it. So I got on the PA system and said, "We got a problem, Halvor and Jinny Smedsrud can't make it up here for about another fifteen, twenty minutes. Is it all right if we hold the game up for them?"

Everybody clapped their hands, said, "Sure," that was all right! And so we held the game up, and they came up. But today that—I suppose somebody would complain or you just wouldn't pay any attention to a request like that.

Dud Dillingham went on to continue to manage the Nugget—did an excellent job. In the fall of '54, we started the first deer contest. We would advertise this in newspapers and magazines, and the prizes were rifles and various things of that type, a Remington I see in this one [shows a mailing flyer and then reads from it]—one advertisement was a Winchester .243, a Remington .280, Remington .22 FieldMaster; there was a cash prize of five hundred dollars, a second prize of five hundred dollars. All the hunters had to do was to come—oh, it was open to both resident and nonresident hunters from Nevada and California—was to come into the Nugget as they came through on their hunting trip and enter their name on an entry blank, and these names were put in a large drum. Everybody was eligible for the prizes regardless of the weight of the deer, and they did not have to be present to win. We also had a refrigerated walk-in box which was so the people could put their deer in overnight if they wanted to stay.

Would you read from that excerpt that's reprinted on the other side of the newspaper article.

Oh, about the gold nuggets? Well, this was just on an advertising brochure that we passed out and mailed out for the deer contest, and then it tells about my securing the gold collection. I'd forgotten this gentleman's name, but it was Charles McKibben that I got the collection from, and he had made this collection over a period of a lot of years.

Says, "The gold on display at the Nugget includes leaf gold, ribbon gold, wire gold, thread gold, and crystallized gold. It is one of the most complete collections of the rare mineral in the West. The great variety of specimens results from the method by which gold precipitates in quartz veins. The nuggets and other forms of gold in the collection have not been altered in any way, but appeared just as they were formed in nature. The shape and size of the cracks and fissures of the quartz in which it was deposited, are responsible for the shapes in which it was formed—removed by the collectors. Some of the leaf specimens are very rare. They are so perfect that there is no doubt whatever that the decomposition of leaves left a void spot where the gold was later formed. The original source of the smooth gold, known as placer gold or nuggets, was also quartz veins; through the process of erosion it was deposited in the gulches and streambeds and was worn smooth to nugget and dust form by constant rolling and tumbling action which the water threw it in contact with the sand and gravel."

The deer contest was continued every year and proved to be a big promotion and we revamped it, revised it, made it bigger. It went on all the time that I had the Nugget in Carson, and then later on we used it in Sparks.

Would that be a good promotion to continue today?

John carried it on for a good many years; I don't know whether he still is or not. Yes, I think it's all right; it brings a lot of people in.

About this time I had an opportunity to make a real estate investment, and this was for eighteen city blocks which was owned by the V & T Railroad people. Now this is just right in the heart of Carson City, very close to where the Nugget is today. Part of it is on the site of the present new post office in Carson City. I took an option on this eighteen city blocks, and they could be purchased for seventy-two thousand dollars cash in those days. I had the option for—I think it was for a year, but this was right at the time that I was enlarging the Carson Nugget and about in the process of developing the Sparks Nugget, and I didn't have the cash at that time to pay for it. I ran an ad for sale in—I see it was in the *Wall Street Journal* in November 5, 1954, offering these eighteen blocks. I didn't—wasn't able to sell them; however, I did sell my option and received two city blocks out of the deal. This was to real estate promoters who went on to sell parts of the property to various people, a block here and a block there. And a funny thing, it ended up that in later years, I went back and bought quite a few of the blocks back for a great deal more than seventy-two thousand dollars, and oddly enough still have them for sale today. The two blocks that I did get for the option, I eventually sold to the United States government for the site of the present post office. It just seems hard to believe that in those days you could have bought this much property for so little money. I believe I had the fortitude to buy 'em, but I just didn't have the money to come up with

at the time to buy them for only seventy-two thousand dollars.

Another thing we always did was, every year we had an anniversary party in the places, and here's one for the first anniversary party [reads from ad] for the Carson Nugget. It says that "you are invited to come to the big anniversary party, special events all day. Two to five p.m. free cake and coffee; five p.m. tree drawing for Westinghouse electric mixer (gee, that was a big deal); eight to nine p.m. was open house; nine p.m. a special surprise for everyone present." This was quite a deal; I passed out brand-new twodollar bills to everybody in the house. Boy, I was really stampeded, I can tell you that. And for years afterward, people would come up and tell me they had one of my twodollar bills. In fact, just a few years ago, a lady that worked in the beauty shop up here at Lake Tahoe, her name was Lilly Pepper, she brought one of the two-dollar bills down and gave it to Flora to give to me to keep.

It was many unusual things like this, I think, that kept the Carson Nugget booming and continually doing more business. We had celebrations for Valentine's Day, Saint Patrick's Day, the slightest occasion that came along, anything that—for any reason at all that we could throw some kind of a celebration, why we did.

About this time I come up with an idea of printing in newspapers all over the general area, particularly in California; here's one I see from Redding, California [reads from old, yellow clipping), was a small ad which was composed mainly of a reproduction of a check—of a Nugget check, and it was made out to the bearer for one dollar. Date says, "Good anytime," it was signed by me, "Dick Graves." And all a customer had to do was to clip that out, bring it in to the Nugget, and we would give them a dollar

in nickels. We had these coming in from all over, and for years and years and years, even after we stopped running the ads, why, they would keep showing up. Just last year Hank Simpson, the present general manager of the Carson Nugget, gave me one that somebody had brought in and cashed at the— at the Carson Nugget and he gave it to me because he thought I would like to have it. This was a good many years ago. This was in 1955, so last year would have been twenty-two years later that somebody brought it in. It was all folded up and wrinkled and stained, apparently it'd been carried around in their wallet for years and years. I think this was at that time one of the best and most successful promotions we had for bringing people in.

Another thing that I did that was unusual in the casino business was that we (this happened in both Sparks and Carson after Sparks was open) closed on Good Friday from noon to three p.m. We always ran an ad in the paper. Here's one which read: "Notice: In order that all our personnel may pause and properly observe Good Friday, we will be closed from noon to three p.m. both in Sparks and Carson City." And then signed by me. We received lots of comments from the press on this and lots of comments from people and it created a real good feeling and made me feel good. And I think it was a good thing.

Could that be done today?

No, I don't think so; John finally had to drop it at the Nugget in Sparks because the place just is too big, and too many employees involved and probably too many employees don't even know what Good Friday is, and a lot of customers that object to it. I don't think in a casino today it could be done. If I had a big casino today, I wouldn't—. But in those

days it was smaller; you knew everybody and everybody accepted those kind of things. It really didn't make much difference; at three o'clock they were all right there and then at five minutes after three, the place was completely full of people.

All of this time that we have been discussing the Carson Nugget, and your great success there. This must have brought in competition. When was the first significant competition in Carson City?

Actually, Carson City never did develop any big competition. There were some other places opened up, one in particular was the Silver Spur; I think it's still there doing a little business, but it never was any big competition to me at all. There really was no place in Carson City in the downtown area that was suitable to put in a second place, and I think a lot of people felt that Carson City wasn't big enough to stand two places. And we really had a pretty good foothold in Carson City by that time.

How many of the state legislators came in?

Oh, we did a great business from the state legislators, both in the bar and the restaurants. And of course they— some of them gambled, some of them didn't just like some people gamble and some people don't. But it was always a good year for us when the legislature was in town. Of course, the lobbyists were some of the biggest customers that we had.

Would you say that a good deal of the state business was transacted in the Carson Nugget?

Well, naturally [laughing]—naturally, there was some business transacted in the Nugget just like they'd be transacted in any restaurant where legislators or lobbyists get

together—and politicians. They'd be naturally talking over the problems of the day or the next day, and sure, they must have come to some conclusions while they were in there.

Could we characterize your successful operation in Carson City as saving the town as Mr. Beebe alluded to in his editorial?

[Laughing] Well, many people have said that, but I don't quite agree with that. I don't think that I *saved* the town by any sense of the imagination, but it certainly gave it a big impetus and sort of brought it out of the doldrums, as Beebe said, and through all the advertising it sort of got it back on its feet to a certain extent. I don't believe there's any question about that.

One other interesting thing that I started in Carson City was—was free meals for anyone in a needy position on Thanksgiving Day or Christmas. I would simply have the newspaper run a news item that anybody that could not afford their Christmas dinner or Thanksgiving dinner, could come to the—in fact, here's a news item: "Free Meal Offered on Holiday. Want a Free Turkey Dinner on Thanksgiving Day? Richard Graves, owner of the Carson Nugget, said any and all who need a Thanksgiving dinner can have one at his place for the asking. No questions asked, he said. The diner merely orders his meal and signs Dick Graves' name to the check. The purpose, of course, is to give a Thanksgiving dinner to anyone who cannot afford one. Graves has been offering these dinners for two years at both Christmas and Thanksgiving. He was asked what percentage of non-needy 'chow hounds' supped free at his board during the holidays. The percentage is high he said, but the ones who need the meal makes up for the others. He said a strong proportion of those taking advantage of his offer are lonely,

elderly people; apparently for them, Graves said, it is just the idea of someone asking them out for dinner. Graves' proposition carries no strings he said. The diner and his family merely order any meal and instead of paying for it at the cashier's desk, sign Graves' name to the check, no questions asked, he insists, and no clearance needed."

This was a big thing. I was happy to do it, and it was very pleasing to me to be there and see the families of people in there eating who did need it. Naturally, there was some abuse to it like there would be abuse to anything that you're giving away, and you simply have to overlook that. Some people would come on in that could easily pay for the meal and say, "Ha-ha, I'm gonna get even with Dick." Well, that was all right. That really didn't make any difference because I'd probably already gotten even with them. But it—it did create an excellent feeling, and this went on—we did this for many, many years. John continued it for a good many years in Sparks. The Carson Nugget still does it. John finally had to stop it because it got such tremendous abuse from, what you might call, freeloaders, people that could easily afford a meal, but were in there just getting the meal. He changed his program for Thanksgiving and Christmas and now provides all the food for Saint Anthony's in Reno that provides the free meals on Thanksgiving and Christmas. He provides all the food, prepares it, and takes it down there for the needy people at that time. That's a good and very generous gesture on his part.

On February 15, 1954, in the Twin Falls Times-News, an article was quoted as saying, A Nevada newspaper says that an estimated one-quarter million dollars in Idaho capital has been invested in Nevada since Idaho outlawed slot machines and that Nevadans

were planning new clubs near the state line in hope of luring sodbuster money.” The February twelfth issue of the Territorial Enterprise and Virginia City News had this to say:

Substantial rise of displaced risk capital floated into Nevada from Idaho last week. There were thirty-six hundred licensed slot machines in the state of Idaho and the following week there were none. Carroll Eaton of Payette, Idaho purchased the Molinelli Hotel in Virginia City for forty-five thousand dollars. Richard Graves, Boise, has bought clubs in Reno, Yerington, and at least one in Carson City and is in the market for one in Fallon.

What is your comment?

It's very factual. The machines had to be taken out of the state 'cause they would have been confiscated had they not been moved, so Nevada was the natural place to take them, so everyone that was in the business throughout the state of Idaho did move machines to Nevada.

Speaking of Carroll Eaton, I knew him very, very well. He was a very good friend of mine. He called his place the Silver Queen, and he had a huge piece done of a lady in Victorian clothes and it was all decorated with seventeen or eighteen hundred silver dollars. I think this still is in one of the places in Virginia City today. Carroll died ten, fifteen years ago.

I don't remember anything about Fallon. I may have been looking at something in Fallon at that time. To get back to Carson City, shortly after we opened, Easter came along and I decided that it'd be great to have a little sidewalk cafe for Easter morning breakfast.

So I got a bunch of tables with umbrellas, built a little white picket fence, lined up four or five tables out in front of the Carson Nugget; and we proceeded to serve breakfast out there. Little did I know the kind of an uproar I was going to create. I was notified by the police shortly thereafter that this was entirely against the law, and that I couldn't do it any more. Well, really I never intended to do it any more; I just intended it as a—sort of a one-time promotion. But the newspapers picked it up. Letters to the editor were coming in fast and furious, and everything was pro Dick Graves and pro Nugget. They were very disgusted that the city should step in and ban such a simple thing as a few tables on the sidewalk for Easter. It actually proved to be a big promotion that I got a lot more advertising out of it than I really bargained for, just because of all the hullabaloo in the papers. It went on for weeks and weeks, and later on it would be mentioned in articles about how much the Nugget had done for Carson and yet the Carson authorities saw fit to stop the sidewalk cafe.

At the time that we came to Carson City, of course, they still had telephone operators. And my number at home that the telephone company gave me was seven-eleven, sevenone-one. I suppose this would have been in maybe '55 or '56, the dial phones came in. But during the time of the— of the telephone operators, most of the operators knew my voice on the phone, particularly long-distance operators, and I was using a lot of long distance at that time because my family was still in Idaho and I still had interests up there. And, we'd always have a little conversation of some kind, a little “How are you?” “What you doin'?” “How busy is the Nugget?”—something like that. It was a Mrs. Hass who was an operator for years and years in Carson City. She always knew my voice. I've got an old ad here that I

ran after the dial phones came in and it starts out, "Thank you, Myrt." And the letter, a little letter comes below this. "This is an open letter of thanks to Bell telephone operators of Carson City. I'm going to miss them, and I know everyone else will. I know the dial tone can't say, 'Good morning, Mr. Graves, my, you sound sleepy.' I know the electric relay won't say, 'Well, it's good to hear your voice again. How was Honolulu?' I know a transistor can't say, 'Well now Mr. Graves, if you were trying to find Morrie Adams, this is his bowling night; let me ring the bowling alley.' But I know, too, that dials are here and that we are all going to appreciate the added service they will provide. So, Myrt, goodbye, and thanks for being so kind and pleasant and patient. We're really going to miss you." Signed, "Dick Graves."

This little story about Morrie Adams actually happened. I was in a hurry to find him one night. He had done all of the electrical work at the Nugget. So I called just to ask the operator for his number, and she said, "Are you tryin' to get Morrie?"

And I said, "Yes."

She said, "Well this is his bowling night. I'll just ring the bowling alley." So I found Morrie, and he came down and fixed our electrical program. But those days are surely gone, and really, for quite a while I missed the operators in Carson City at that time.

I've mentioned before that we leased the Miller building on July fifth. This is all in 1954. The Miller building was adjacent to the present Nugget and was about fifty or sixty feet in space on Carson Street. This was remodeled and we took part of it into the casino, added more machines, also added a small lounge. And the first entertainment that we brought into the lounge was Turk Murphy and his New Orleans Jazz Band, and from that time on Turk's been a very good friend of mine

and I always visit him in San Francisco when I go over there. He's still at—I shouldn't say he's still at—he had to move from Earthquake McGoon's and I understand he's putting in a place at One Embarcadero Center now, in that general area, but we'll still call it Earthquake McGoon's.

The lounge was reasonably successful, and we always kept some type of entertainment in it. It was one of the first lounges—well, the only lounge, I guess, in Carson City at the time, and used to draw lots of local business plus the tourist business.

During this time Bob Tillotson, who I've mentioned before, was working for me, and of course my accountant and secretary, Margaret Pinneo was in Carson too. About this time—well, to go back a little bit, Bob had tried to negotiate for me for a location in Sparks at—it'd be Twelfth and B Streets where McDonald's Furniture was, and we had an agreement all drawn up and then I decided that it was just a little more than I wanted to do right at that time. This was again now in 1954. So I backed away from it.

Later on in the latter part of '54, we did go back and made the same deal with McDonald and leased his place which later, in fact the next year, became the Sparks Nugget. Bob was responsible for securing this location for me as well as the Carson City Nugget location, and I've always been indebted to him for doing it. Now you have to remember that all this time my poor family's sittin' up in Idaho. This is from January of '54—I'm down in Nevada, they're up in Idaho, wondering what's gonna happen, what we're gonna do. Of course, we'd made the decision to move, and the children were still in school.

In May, I went and found a house down near Cave Rock on Lake Tahoe, rented that for a month, and the family all came down and lived in this house at Cave Rock. Then

while they were there—while Flora was down here, we rented a house on East Fifth Street, a little small house that had just been built. So, in—let me see, in July, Flora went back to Idaho; it was impossible for me to go back. I did for a short time, flew up a couple times, but she had the problem of getting everything packed up and ready to move to Nevada, which was done in the latter part of July; the first part of August we moved into the little house on East Fifth. This was a very small house; we furnished it with some of the things we brought down from Idaho and some crates and boxes. I went and bought paper draperies for the windows because we didn't intend to stay there of course. It was quite crowded for us because there were my four children and, of course, Beebe was with us, Beebe Savini, Flora's niece.

It was during this time in this house, I remember very vividly one night, there was an earthquake. The house was shaking, first thing I knew I had all the kids in bed with me. That was quite a scary thing to go through this, the whole house movin' around, furniture and everything. Then, about this time, of course Frank Green had been doing quite a bit of work for me, and during the time in Carson I'd gone and looked at various pieces of property with the idea of building a house on one of them. So, I had three or four picked out, and I went and got Frank Green; we drove around Carson looking at these various pieces of vacant property. And coming back into town, we were driving up Mountain Street and we passed this old, two-story, red house on Mountain and Robinson, and Frank said, "Gee, there's a nice, old house."

And I said, "Yeah, and it's for sale."

And he said, "Let's go in and look at it."

And I said, "I've already looked at it."

He said, "Well, let's go look at it."

And I said, "Well, Frank, I don't want to start remodeling an old house."

He said, "Let's go look at it."

So we went in, knocked on the door and the people let us in, and we went through it. And he said, "Let me send a draftsman over and take a floor plan of the house and see what I can do with it." So in a few days he called me, and he had a very workable plan for remodeling it. The price of the house was right, and as I remembered, it was twenty-eight thousand dollars. So, I bought the house, and then called Flora in Boise and told her about it. Needless to say [chuckling], she was somewhat shocked, but she came on down, of course, and then worked with Frank and we remodeled it and worked it around our furniture from Idaho, and I've always been extremely thankful to Frank for doing what he did there because the house was in a beautiful location. It was right across from the governor's mansion, it had a lot of trees on it, a nice yard. It was close to schools, church, library, downtown. The children could walk or ride their bicycles anywhere, and we weren't running a taxi service for them. He completely revamped the house. He put a master bedroom where the kitchen was; he put the kitchen where the master bedroom had been, and a couple years later we built a big family room onto one end of the house, and we still live in the house, and it was an ideal house in every way for us in which to raise our family during those years when I was so busy in all these various activities.

It's—again, a funny thing how certain people play such a big part in your life, and Frank Green certainly played an enormous part in my life. I'll get into that a little more thoroughly as we go on, but this was one instance of it. Here we moved out of a brand-new house in Idaho into a house that was built in the 1880s in Carson City,

and remodeled it, and it proved to be entirely satisfactory and really just the thing that was perfect for our family.

How long did it take to sell your house in Boise?

We had somewhat of a problem in selling the house in Boise because it was such a big house, and it just wasn't readily salable. It was finally traded for a building in downtown Boise at Eighth and Main Streets. This was a three-, four-story building, and then in a few years, I sold that building. I actually took a pretty good beatin' on the sale of that house, but in the long run that didn't seem to bother, because everything worked out so well for me in Nevada.

What was the one main thing that Frank Green did to the Mountain Street house to make it your home?

Well, first off, I sent him up to Boise to look at our furniture that was in the house in Boise, so he knew what we had, by that, he could see how we lived. He knew our requirements, and Frank had an ability to—to make a room feel good; this could be a house or a restaurant or whatever. In his way of doing and decorating things, he had almost automatic ability to make the room feel good. By feeling good, I mean that you were comfortable in it, that you liked it, that you enjoyed it. This is what he did with the house on Mountain Street. He made it a house that fit around us. He put the dining room right adjoining the kitchen, so that it wasn't a separate formal dining room, yet it was a very lovely dining room. We had a nice, heavy oak dining room table, and it was a convenient room to serve. We ate all our family meals there or did all our entertaining there. And then later on, we felt the need for a family room, and he built that on right

adjoining the kitchen, and the kitchen and dining room. It really served to be a beautiful home for us.

That was Frank Green's major contribution to the Carson Nugget?

I would say that Frank's major contribution to the Carson Nugget was in 1956; we built on to the back of the Gabler building. This was the building on the corner, across from the post office. We built right on to that building, an addition to provide a steak house, and we called it the Round House. I still think it's one of the best pieces of work that Frank did. This was done: the wall that he was working with (the existing wall of the Nugget) was an old brick wall; then he came down with some great, heavy beams, using telephone poles as supports—the roof slanted down—and used some brick, put a great big charcoal broiler in one corner of the room, so that we could have exhibition cooking. And the room had a very simple menu of about eight, ten items total, opened to capacity business and did capacity business immediately. The room still exists today in exactly—practically the same way as it was when it was built in 1956 in the Carson Nugget.

I often remember one thing when the room was being built; on this brick wall of the—of the Broderick building, there had been a lean-to (kind of a lean-to shed on it), and way up on the brick wall was a bunch of tar where they'd waterproofed—tried to waterproof the roof of this lean-to. Well, this tar was kind of ugly as far as I was concerned, and I said, "What are we gonna do about that tar, Frank?"

And he said, "Gee, I wish there was some more of it; it just looks very nice up there." So it's there still today, that big line of tar. I never see it that I don't think of Frank.

How did Frank Green anchor that engine wheel to the ceiling that provides the basis of a light in that room? Isn't that a wheel from an old railroad engine?

No, all of those gears and wheels are the hand-carved wooden patterns for the shops of the V & T Railroad. In other words, the patterns—these were the wooden patterns from which the sand molds were made, into which steel was poured (the molten steel) to make the gears and wheels. They look like that steel, but they're just wood.

Another man that helped me a great deal on the Round House was a man by the name of Grahame Hardy. He lived in Virginia City, and he was a specialist in railroad artifacts and sold railroad artifacts that he had collected all over the United States to railroad collectors and railroad buffs. He worked with me in finding various things to decorate the room with and oh, ticket schedules and things of that sort, tied into the old Virginia and Truckee Railroad. He was a very fine gentleman and helped me a great deal.

How did that meeting come about? Between you and Mr. Hardy? Through Frank Green?

No, I think Grahame was just a customer of the Nugget. A lot of people used to come down from Virginia City, to the Carson Nugget 'cause at that time there wasn't too much in Virginia City. So, I think that's the way I met him, and of course then he knew we were putting in the room and I knew what he did, and so I went to him, that's all.

I notice that the Round House, reading from your announcement, "Will bring you mahogany-broiled steaks and seafoods." Now what exactly is a mahogany-broiled steak?

Well, this is actually what they call Mesquite; you get it up in the mountains; it's called mountain mahogany, and various people collect this and bring it into some of the restaurants—and it's a very hard wood. And it's used to broil with. It burns down and produces a charcoal which naturally gives the steaks a good flavor.

About this time, I decided to put in Keno into Carson City. And so I was getting ready to put it in, and of course, the only Keno in town was at a place called Tommy's, and a chap came over to see me one day; his name was Joe Peroglio. The word had gotten out that I was going to put in the Reno limit, which was ten thousand dollars at that time. This would be the limit that you could win on—on any one game, any one Keno game. In other words, if there were two people that won ten thousand dollars on the game, the limit would only be ten thousand that would be paid out, and so each person would win five thousand. This is very unlikely to happen, but it was a protection. I forget what the limit was at Tommy's; I think it was twenty-five hundred dollars, and Joe tried to convince me that I should keep the limit at twenty-five hundred. Well, I was quite aware that there were a lot of local people that were going to Reno right along, that liked to play Keno and certainly weren't playing at Tommy's, and I couldn't see any reason for 'em drivin' all the way to Reno, so I told him no, I was gonna put in the same limit as Reno. Well, he told me that it would never work, and that it just wouldn't support it—the town wouldn't have enough play to support that big a limit. Well, I did put it in. Of course, it worked, and the odd end of the story is that when I opened the Sparks Nugget, Joe Peroglio came in as manager of the Keno in the Sparks Nugget.

In talking about the mountain mahogany, one thing that's interesting is that charcoal

or mountain mahogany after it's burned down to charcoal, produces infrared rays. This is why a steak cooked over charcoal is so much superior to a steak that's cooked on a grill. The steak that's cooked on a grill is cooked by convection; the heat has to come up through the steak, whereas cooking on a grill with charcoal, it is cooked by convection of the heat plus infrared rays which are penetrating the steak and cooking the interior of it at the same time that the outside of the steak is being cooked. Thus you can get a charcoal-broiled steak, rare or medium-rare, and the inside will not be raw; it will be somewhat cooked. This is something very few people know. They just know that a charcoal-broiled steak is better, but they don't know why.

That about these gas-fired barbecue grills that are on the market. Are they similar?

Well, I can't see how they can work—they can't compare to charcoal because they wouldn't produce infrared rays. Sure they'll cook because the heat's there, but the heat has to work by convection all the way through the meat. There are no infrared rays to penetrate the meat and cook the interior. I developed an infrared cooker even while I was up in Idaho and then we brought it down to Nevada and had in several of the places—we had it in Carson and also in Sparks—a rotisserie on which we used to cook cross-rib of beef. This was a beef roast that was made up about seven, eight inches in diameter and fourteen, sixteen inches long tied with string, and it was put on this machine which turned, and the only cooking source was from about ten or twelve infrared light bulbs. So it did a beautiful job of cooking the meat, and it was exhibition cooking—it was turning in front

of the customer. We had it so that you could see it from the coffee shop in both the Carson Nugget and the Sparks Nugget. This again produced a good-tasting piece of meat because the infrared rays penetrated the meat, cooked the interior of it and yet it could still be—look rare and yet it was actually cooked enough to eat it; it wasn't raw on the inside of the roast.

How was that situated on the counter so that the chef was not burned in the cooking process?

Well, it just set on the back part of the counter, and the lamps just directed down at the roast, so there's no way of getting burned. They were just regular infrared lamps that you can buy today, anyplace. They have them in bathrooms lots of times that's the same type of a heat lamp called infrared heat lamp.

Are you a big advocate of this showmanship type of cooking where you have the chef out in front, before the customers?

Yes, of course in the Round House that was what we had; we had open cooking, "exhibition" cooking it's called really. Yes, I think that's great; people like to see that. It's—I don't know, there's something about it that makes your meal more interesting to see the cook back there working, and they like to see that action going on.

Why is it that you don't see that very often nowadays?

Well, I don't know. You see it around; you can see the whole fry line in the new General Store at the Nugget in Sparks, see, the cooks all working back there. And they still have—they still have the exhibition cooking in the—what they call the Steak House in the Sparks

Nugget. Incidentally, we duplicated the Round House in the original Nugget in Sparks, and then we duplicated it again when we moved across the street, it was such a successful room. Later on that was enlarged, and it still is basically the same room, has that—has the cooking right in the room with the big hood over it. So there's still quite a few places use it. It can't be done in a great big, huge restaurant; you'd have to have room for four or five chefs, cooks. In a place that seats eighty, ninety, a hundred people, why it can be handled pretty easy.

On September 25, 1954, I signed a lease with McDonald who had a furniture store at Twelfth and B Street in Sparks. This was fifty by a hundred and forty feet. Went to work right away, remodeling it and getting it set up for another Nugget. I might add at this time that a chap came to work for me who proved to do a tremendous job over the years for me and meant an awful lot to my success. He's passed away now, but he was with me for years and years and also with John after I sold to him. His name was Ole Severson. Ole had worked for Jim Kelley in Idaho at Idaho Falls, and then had come down to Nevada and also worked for Jim. He worked for Jim and I, when we were at the Reno Nugget; then of course I had later on sold my interest in it to Kelley. And in the meantime, Ole had gotten to doing an enormous amount of drinking. He went from bad to worse, and I'd hear of him or see him; and he was down in Las Vegas because I think Kelley had an interest in some place down there at that time also, and I hadn't heard from Ole in a long time. And one day in later '54, I was over in Sparks, and we had leased the corner just opposite the McDonald building, across Twelfth Street, which had been a drugstore and was vacant. We had leased it and unloaded all of the equipment that came down from Idaho that we thought

we might be able to use some of in the Sparks Nugget. So, I was in there rummaging through this stuff and sort of inventorying it to see what we had and what we could use, and Ole came in. And, boy, he was a tough-lookin' individual. He looked terrible, and he wants a job. So I said, "No, no way, Ole," I said, "you know that there's no way you can go to work for me." And I said, "You're full of whiskey all the time and it just wouldn't work out; we'd just have problems." So I just went around, on with what I was doing.

He hung around, hung around, hung around, and he finally— he kept talking to me some more, and he was extremely capable and I needed somebody. So I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do, Ole; I'll make you a proposition." I says, "You can go to work, and you can go to work tomorrow," I said, "if you will make me an absolute and complete promise today that the first drink that you take, that you'll come and get your paycheck. I won't have to fire you. I won't have to tell you to quit; you will just automatically come and get your check and leave." We agreed to that, and Ole went on to do a *tremendous* job for me and to his dying day he didn't take another drink.

He had a tough time for quite a while, and when we were getting ready to build the Sparks Nugget and put it together. Ole was very handy with tools and with his hands. He was living in a house across the street, I think, right where the Nugget is now. And it had a garage, so I brought in a bunch of power equipment, band saw and a table saw, and lathe, and all the necessary carpenter tools that he needed. And he went to work right from that time on and started getting this equipment in shape and sort of ramrodding the construction of the Sparks Nugget. So he was—he not only had the ability to do this construction work, he had had, of course, a lot of experience working for Kelley and for

myself and in the clubs, and he knew slot machines. So, he worked as one of the shift managers in the original Sparks Nugget. Later on we put him in charge—years later on, we put him in charge of all the construction work, and he worked under John in that capacity, working at times back on the floor as a general manager when he was needed. But, surprisingly so, he stayed on the wagon and did a absolutely perfect job; he was completely and absolutely honest in every way and very honorable. And I was always happy to see that it worked out that way with Ole.

I have one thing to add to 1954; while doing research on your career, Mr. Graves, I took particular note of some of the prices in the newspapers of those—that time, especially 1954. And I jotted down the following prices: hamburger (three pounds), 99 cents; Alaska salmon, 35 cents a pound; two six-ounce cans of orange juice, 31 cents; one pound of coffee, 97 cents; lettuce, 12 cents a pound; grapefruit (eight-pound bag), 49 cents; T-bone steak, 79 cents a pound; sirloin steak, 65 cents a pound; round steak, 69 cents a pound; sliced bacon, 69 cents a pound; and frozen foods, 23 cents a package. Also, in 1954, a Nash Rambler sedan retailed in the showrooms for \$1,550; a Nash Metropolitan car that was manufactured in England and sold here in the United States that got 40 miles to the gallon, sold for \$1,445. The lightweight champion of the world in 1954 was a boxer, believe it or not, named Jimmy Carter. And in March of 1954, March twenty-fifth to be exact, President Eisenhower sent in two hundred ninety-four American technicians to Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam. And so 1954 was an eventful year wouldn't you say?

Yes, very much so. And those prices—hearing those prices, you know, it sort of scares you. Yesterday Flora was showing me

a can of garbanzos that she'd just bought at the store, just yesterday, and it was priced 49 cents. And she still had one on the shelf that we bought either last year or maybe the year before that was priced 28 cents—same can, same size, same brand. This is the biggest problem facing all of us today is inflation.

Okay, I think I'll go back and pick up a few things that I forgot in the year '54, the year that I opened the Carson Nugget. Number one thing is I gave the wrong opening date. The opening date was actually March fourth. During this time, as I've said before, we started Blackout Bingo. We had numerous drawings of every kind that you could think of. I see an ad, an old ad, where I was complaining that people had shot down the helium balloon that we had floating over the Nugget. In the ad I said, "Please, help us bring more tourists to Carson City. Don't shoot down our advertising balloon. It takes over two hundred dollars in helium gas to till this balloon. Give us a break! Let's bring more tourists to Carson City."

During that time I ran a "Guest of the Day" every day, where they could come in for lunch. The newspaper picked the names; we didn't have anything to do with the picking of the names. They would pick the name of somebody in town and ran a little one-column, two-inch ad. This was good public relations.

We had one man who played the machines an awful lot, and he had a record of having won a total of eleven hundred and thirty-two jackpots since the Carson Nugget was open, and this was up to October eighteenth, '54. We ran an ad with his picture and an affidavit which he signed and it was notarized and everything. And it said, "Since the Nugget in Carson City has been open, I have won a total of eleven hundred and thirty-two

jackpots.” And then the word jackpots we had to blank out because at that particular time, and in fact, for quite a few years, we couldn’t use the word jackpot in an ad. He goes on to say, “And one day alone from seven o’clock a.m. to twelve o’clock p.m. I won sixtythree jackpots at the Nugget. I believe beyond any question of doubt that the Nugget has the most liberal slot machines.” And that word is blanked out. So, in this ad I ran the picture of the affidavit along with his picture and the word “censored” across it. Naturally, this drew a lot of attention. His name was Arthur B. “Pop” Howard from the Anaconda Copper Company in Yerington. Not being able to run the word jackpot, we couldn’t run the word Bingo, so in all my Bingo ads the—it says, “Play OGNIB,” Bingo spelled backwards, and the newspaper would accept it that way. *

Another thing that happened in 1954 (which could have been an absolute calamity) was that on October thirty-first, which was Nevada Day, we had a fire at the Nugget; and this was started as most fires in restaurants start, in the exhaust pipe above the grills. They were able to put the fire out. And there’s one interesting article that was printed in the *Territorial Enterprise*, which I’ll read:

Everybody present in Carson City Saturday for the Admission Day admitted that in attempting to burn itself down, at the height of the festivities, the Golden Nugget gambling parlors did a patriotic thing very handsomely. Happily, Warren Engine Company was holding open house at the time so that all the fire fighters were present and practically on the scene of the conflagration and no burning of Rome ensued. Bystanders who cheered as the hoses were laid, recalled the less auspicious

day occasion when Hunter’s Lodge caught fire and burned.

At that time, the Carson Fire Department was mostly volunteer, and that’s why they’re talking about all the firemen being present, and I believe if they hadn’t been we would have lost the whole building.

You mentioned about the exhaust vent. What is it about that particular part of a restaurant that makes it so susceptible to fires?

Well, it’s because it’s an exhaust above the cooking area of the kitchen, and while you have grease traps, at that time they were not perfected very well and it was a lot of grease got through. If a fire started somewhere on the stove and some grease got spilled on the stove, it would go up and be sucked into the—into the exhaust pipe. And of course the grease would ignite very easily, and many, many restaurants have been burned down because of that. Now they have a new system where the air, which naturally includes grease fumes, is drawn through a water spray, and this removes the grease. I know in the new part of the Sparks Nugget John has installed an extremely elaborate system using this new type of hood plus automatic fire extinguishers that are built right within the exhaust pipe and around the whole inside of the hood, so if a fire does start it automatically puts it out. This system is very sophisticated and very efficient. Of course, at that time we didn’t have any such things.

*Federal laws forbade advertising gambling across state lines; newspapers are regarded as in interstate commerce.

And very expensive.

I imagine [chuckling]. I don't know what it runs now, but it would be—run a lot of money. But after all, if it's going to save the place from burning down, it doesn't amount to anything.

I notice another ad which we ran shortly after we opened, stating that six hundred and fifty jackpots had been paid in three days (this is on only thirty machines), also bringing out the fact that our jackpots were metered. This was a new innovation that we brought down from Idaho and put up a lighted board in full view of everyone so that when a jackpot hit, if it were on machine number twenty-three, number twenty-three would light up and an automatic meter would advance showing that so far that day there'd been eighty-two jackpots paid. As the next one paid it would advance to eighty-three. This just convinced people that the machines were liberal and the machines were paying a lot of jackpots.

What constituted a jackpot?

Well, it would be three bars on the machine or there, of course, were other symbols, maybe three sevens, that would be a bigger jackpot. And, these were all metered so that they were connected with this board. It was a very good thing at the time. However, as casinos got bigger and bigger, it just got so that it was so unwieldy that it couldn't be handled very well. We used it in the Nugget in Sparks for years, and of course the jackpots there in a day's time would be up to four, five, six thousand; I suppose even higher—way higher than that now—I don't know what they run.

How is that different from the Harolds Club progressive jackpot that they advertise so extensively?

Well, we had the progressive jackpots later on, too. This has no connection with the jackpot board. It's just another type of a jackpot where it is a jackpot that is harder to hit because it's—the odds are much harder to get the progressive jackpot, and a meter on the machine keeps adding so much to the jackpot, so that it keeps building up and building up. These are used in all the casinos today, progressive jackpots.

Another thing we did in Carson that particular year was a giant Christmas stocking filled with toys of all types. This was a big thing; the stocking was about, as I remember it, about ten, twelve feet high, and it was of a mesh, so that you could see through it and see what was in it. This was given—we'd give tickets to everybody when they won a jackpot and then have a drawing, and they would win this giant Christmas stocking just before Christmastime.

What were the types of gifts within this stocking?

Oh, just numerous types of toys and games and things for children.

March 4, 1955, the Carson Nugget furnished the first free ski bus for the ski program—the first Carson Ski Program up at Slide Mountain. And in the years that followed, why, I furnished the ski bus for the children to go up there.

One thing I've neglected to mention was the creation of "Last Chance Joe," the idea. This was actually done while we were still in Idaho, and we had a place in Garden City, which I've mentioned before, called the Last Chance Cafe that was right alongside the Circle M Cafe. So, we wanted to create an idea of an old miner or something like that, and a very good friend of mine by the name of Duke Reading—actually his first name was

Roscoe. He was an artist and had a silk screen business. So, I sort of commissioned Duke to come up with some kind of a character, some kind of a design that we could use, and he created Last Chance Joe, which we used so extensively and of course is still being used, and I guess even in Carson City they're still using it to a certain extent; they still have the big Last Chance Joe at the Nugget in Sparks. We eventually had rubber dolls made that were about twelve, fourteen inches high and sold tens of thousands of these dolls. It was a good character— sold for one dollar.

Funny thing, I was at an antique show in Carson City with Flora just recently, and they had one of these "Last Chance Joe" dolls in a booth for sale of eight dollars— an antique! Along with that—along with the idea of using Last Chance Joe, when we came to Nevada, there was a character, an old-timer that lived in Virginia City, by the name of "Badwater Bill." And we used Badwater Bill a great deal in various types of promotion and giveaways and used him in parades. He was Last Chance Joe whenever he was workin' for me, and when he was up at Virginia City he was Badwater Bill. He actually worked for the state of Nevada for years and went to all the big sports shows advertising the sporting and recreational facilities of Nevada all over the country. He was very colorful and very picturesque, had a tall line to tell and could—could keep up with anybody in a conversation. So he created a lot of interest, not only for us, but for the state.

In 1954 the Chamber of Commerce in Carson City really didn't amount to much, and there was a big membership campaign on. There's an article here which says, "A new classification of memberships has been established by the board this year." She explained, "Standard business memberships are twenty-five dollars; sponsoring, fifty dollars; sustaining, seventy-five dollars; and

contributing, a hundred dollars. Those who enroll for the standard fee will receive special seals on their cards. First local businessman to earn a gold seal was Tim Martinez of the Old Corner." (This was quite a favorite watering place in Carson City, a small bar. He took out a hundred-dollar membership.) "Mr. Bear of the Bear's Jewelry Store was a blue chip member." And then it says, "The super special memberships have been taken out by Dick Graves of the Nugget with one thousand dollars and by George Cannon of the Senator Club with five hundred dollars.

What kind of support did the Chamber give you while you were operating the Nugget in Carson?

All the support I wanted. They were—the Chamber was very cooperative in every way; all the merchants were. Actually the Carson Nugget sort of just took the town out of the doldrums and set it to moving. Everybody felt that way because we were bringing lots of people in. Of course, the merchants were feeling the results of it, so they were all extremely cooperative. I see in here an ad that I ran on Nevada Day advertising all the motels in Carson City—of which there weren't very many. There were only six motels at that time, but the motels were always very good to me; they gave away lucky bet coupons and they directed people to come down there to dinner and meant a great deal to the Nugget. All the merchants did; we had everybody—it was a great—it was a small, little friendly town that everyone knew everybody else, and the Nugget indirectly was helping all businesses in town that way. So, consequently everybody was very cooperative. I see in this motel ad, "Carson City's fine motels invite you to return, Ormsby Motel, Aurora Motel, Desert Inn Motel, Carson Motor Lodge, El Rancho, and the Gateway Motor Hotel." As near as I

know, this is probably all the motels that were in town. That didn't account for very many rooms.

At that time, what night or what day was typically the busiest for the Nugget?

Oh naturally, like in any casino, Friday, Saturday nights were always busiest, or any holiday that came on a weekend, so that there was a three- or four-day holiday. Those were always the busy times. Naturally in the summertime it was much busier than in the wintertime.

And the slack period was Monday and Tuesday?

Yes, probably, just like right now; it slows down the first part of the week. And you could always tell the last part of the month. It was always a little slower than the rest [of] the time because people didn't have their checks yet.

Along with other things that we gave away, I read someplace about a Mexican burro, and I ordered this Mexican burro and it was shipped up by railway express to the Nugget. And I see an ad—a news item along with a picture. It says, “Mexican burro stopped traffic on Carson last week as Jack Lindsay of the Railway Express delivered it to the Nugget. From left to right are Last Chance Joe, Lindsay, Dud Dillingham, Ollie Balmer, Bill Carter, and Dick Graves, and Johnny the burro. He was won last night by Robert J. Hutman of Carson City, who now is debating just what to do with him.” Another picture shows “traffic patrolman, Jack Shoemaker, takes no backtalk from any parking violator, not even a burro. Here he writes out a tag for Johnny, who apparently forgot to put enough nuggets in his meter.” (The donkey was tied to the meter.) Of course, all these things were set up, and the paper was very cooperative.

And these kind of things created a lot of interest—well, actually they made the Nugget; all this type of promotion and advertising just brought people in.

I notice another one, another picture in the *Appeal* on Monday, February 28, 1955: “Honoring Ormsby County workers in the coming Red Cross drive was a tea given by Mrs. Charles Russell at the governor's mansion, Thursday afternoon. More than forty guests attended. In the picture from left to right are Philip C. Glebow, Pacific area field representative; Nick Carter, Ormsby County chapter chairman; Mrs. Russell; Reverend William Lynn, national vice-chairman of the 1955 campaign; Dick Graves, local fund chairman; and Mrs. Blake Darling. Assisting Mrs. Russell as hostess were Mrs. Darling and Mrs. R. Lester Kelly. Pouring at the tea table decorated in silver and red were Mrs. Graves and Mrs. Glebow. The kickoff breakfast will be held Tuesday morning at the Nugget at ten for all captains and workers.”

Seeing Mrs. Lester Kelly's name at this time, I really ought to mention Mrs. Kelly. I've mentioned before that when we first came to Carson City, we rented a house on East Fifth Street. And it just so happened that the Lester Kellys were neighbors. Well, Mrs. Kelly especially, and of course Lester, were extremely gracious to myself and Mrs. Graves; and Mrs. Kelly had a party or two for Flora and introduced her to her various friends and people who were prominent Carson people at the time. And these people have remained our friends all through these years, and it's rather interesting that next week on the twenty-third of August, which just happens to be my birthday, Flora is having a party for twenty-four ladies from Carson City here at the Lake house. Mrs. Kelly won't be among them because she now lives in Seattle, Washington, and her present name is Mrs.

Jared. Lester Kelly later on was a councilman in Carson City, and did a great deal for Carson City.

I mentioned earlier about the anniversary party that we had, the first anniversary party for the Nugget in which I gave away two-dollar bills. I see a little article from the *Territorial Enterprise* for March 4, 1955. This was just one year after we opened:

Carson City. (It's datelined Carson City.) Already rocked on its congress gaiters by the elaborate promotion and advertising brought to the smallest capital of the union during the past year by Dick Graves; Nugget gambling saloon, Carson will again experience pleasant tumults when the Nugget celebrates its first year of operation with a birthday party tonight, Friday the fourth. Twenty-five cases of champagne will be opened by the management during an open house reception from eight to nine p.m. and limitless cake and coffee will be served patrons all after noon. A surprise of gratifyingly material nature is promised by Mr. Graves for everyone present at nine p.m.

Well, of course this was when I passed out hundreds of the two-dollar bills, which really shook everybody up and actually, in effect, didn't amount to much cost overall. It was a— it's something that people talked about for years.

You probably got a good many of those two-dollar bills back in the machines.

Oh yes, a lot of them came back, and lots of people kept them though. Lots of people had me sign them. I still run across people

every once in a while who say, "I've still got that two-dollar bill." It's—it was just a funny, unusual gimmick that seemed to work.

When you first arrived in Carson City, did the town immediately accept you?

Well, there were no problems. People weren't against me or anything like that, no. And we had some run-ins with the city like I mentioned about putting the tables out on the sidewalk and a few things like that, but the place became such an absolute immediate success, the food was good and they liked it. The town needed it right at that time, and so it was really accepted in every way. We never had any aggravation from anybody.

At the peak of your operation in Carson City, how many employees did you have?

Well, it's a little hard to say, but I would say maybe oh, forty, fifty, which was pretty big at that time, in those days [chuckling]. Oh, of course, it doesn't amount to anything now.

Well, that's a sizable payroll. In the area of benefits, what did you offer any employee at the Nugget?

At that time it was—employees just weren't given many benefits back in those days, the general employees. Later— way later on, we started the profit-sharing plan which I was the first casino in the state of Nevada to start, and I think one of the few that still has it. I paid good wages, good bonuses at Christmastime, things like that. We had excellent, loyal employees that stayed and worked with us a long time, and great many of the employees that came down from Idaho and started in Carson are still with John Ascuaga in Sparks.

Did these employees in Carson and in other places, even as far back as Idaho, come under the Social Security Act?

Yes, they came under Social Security whenever it started, I forget what year it started. They naturally came under that.

Looking at the scrapbook, it appears to me that you were one of the big advertisers for the Appeal. How much advertising did you do? Once a week, everyday, what frequency did you run an ad?

Well, we ran a daily ad with the “Guest of the Day.” That was a one-column, two-inch ad. We ran a daily ad for the Bingo, which showed the number of balls being drawn when they would win the Blackout Bingo and the amount of the Blackout Bingo. I see one here that’s thirteen hundred and seventy-five dollars in fifty-two numbers. There was no frequency of the advertising, other than those regular ads. Whenever the notion hit me or whenever I felt we needed something to bring in some business, we’d have some kind of a special drawing or a special night. I see one here is “Country Store Night Every Tuesday Night. Free prizes and surprises.” “Tonight Free: Mexican Chihuahua puppies.” Of course, what I’d do would be to build a little cage within the place and these puppies’d be on display for a week, ten days ahead of the drawing, and naturally a bunch of little Chihuahua puppies, everybody wants to win one, so the place would be absolutely jammed the night that we’d have these special drawings. We had, of course, the Blackout Bingo was running all the time, and it filled the place up every night. I see we had an April Fool’s Party. Says, “No fooling. We’re going to have a lot of fun, just fooling around.” I don’t remember what we did, but we had free prizes. We had “Surprise Package

Night.” These would be packages all wrapped up in gift-wrap paper, maybe fifteen, twenty prizes; and some of them would have good things in them, some of them had jokes, some might have money, maybe it’d be a toaster or a waffle iron or just anything that happened to strike my fancy [chuckling], why we’d do it! Anything that was something that would create some interest, something that would create some talk, was great for the Nugget and was responsible for making it the success that it was.

What was the biggest prize that you ever gave away?

I just can’t remember. I think we gave away a couple of cars and Jeeps for—and of course a lot of guns and things like that for the deer contest.

During this time, of course, we didn’t limit our advertising to newspapers; we also used the radio a great deal. There was a disc jockey by the name of “Cactus Tom” who was with KOH, and I used him a great deal. He had a western twang to his voice and wore a big cowboy hat, and his program was extremely popular. So he would get on the telephone and call the Nugget, find out what the special was for the day or he might find out how many jackpots had been paid out so far that day, anything that he happened to think of he’d be asking. This would be on the phone, and then he’d—all of these various giveaways and things like that, he talked up and brought up. It was good, and he was—I see a picture of him here; he was the Grand Marshal of the Nevada Day Parade in Carson City. Long time star of radio and television. So he worked for years for me and was very successful as far as bringing people in.

During this time, here I’m giving all these things away and there was a little friction got

going between some of the smaller casinos and they got together and tried to get these giveaways stopped. I'll read an article that appeared March 17, 1955. This would have been just one year after I opened the Nugget:

Open Hearing on Giveaway Bill

A group of Carson businessmen joined others last night before an assembly judiciary hearing to protest and/or advocate passage of a bill which would abolish giveaways in connection with gambling. Gratuities or intentional losses as come-ons to advertise gambling would be prohibited under terms of a bill introduced by Stan Erwin, Las Vegas Democrat. After introduction, an amendment was proposed by Erwin and adopted by the assembly that would allow a normal amount of public relations activity in the form of free drinks. George Cannon, operator of the Senator Club, supported the bill, although he said he uses a giveaway program, he said by the use of gratuities he has received a lot of adverse publicity. Giveaways are making a carnival out of gambling, and if it is not stopped, it will shorten the life in the state, he said. Paul Laxalt, attorney representing the Nugget, opposed the bill saying that it was a poor piece of legislation. He said that as a practical matter it would be almost impossible to enforce. He pointed out that while the bill was directed at giving away prizes and tickets as an inducement to gambling, Las Vegas clubs with free floorshows were also using a come-on to attract customers. The matter

of stopping giveaways in gambling should be a local problem, Laxalt said, and should not be done by the state legislature. Others who appeared to oppose the bill were Bill Harrah, owner of Harrah's Club in Reno and Frank Apalategui who operates the Richfield service station in Carson. Apalategui said that giveaways here had helped his business by drawing in more customers to the area. Others at the hearing who supported the bill were Jim MaVay, Carson Smoke Shop; Tim Martinez, Old Corner Bar; Harry Ramirez, Enrico's; George Harmon, Las Vegas assemblyman.

This bill never passed, and it's rather interesting to note that I eventually bought George Cannon out from the Senator Club, Jim McVay eventually sold his Carson Smoke Shop, Tim Martinez closed the Corner Bar, Harry Ramirez was never successful in Enrico's. All of these people were complaining and yet they were indirectly, I feel, benefitting from the people that were coming into Carson.

What was your entertainment policy? There is mention there of the free floorshows in Las Vegas. Was there any entertainment going on at this time in Carson Nugget?

Well, I can't remember the exact date, but after we acquired the Miller building to the north of the Nugget, we put in a lounge show (a lounge room) which had a small stage. And I believe I've mentioned it before, the first entertainer was Turk Murphy and his jazz band, who still plays in San Francisco. We had Jack Teagarden; we had lots of different lounge acts in the show as time went on. That was in '55 and '56; in '54 we didn't have anything.

In 1955 the Carson-Tahoe Hospital was a very small hospital. They wanted to enlarge it, and there was a big campaign started to raise money for the hospital. The chairman was Ella Broderick Wilson, who is the lady that leased me the original space for the Nugget. I decided to put up a car, as the grand prize for this hospital party; and I'll read an article here that tells a little bit about it, August 19, 1955:

Ford Sedan is Major
Prize in Hospital Party

Major prize in the Carson-Tahoe Hospital Benefit Party in the Civic Auditorium, September 30, will be a 1955 Ford sedan complete with overdrive, radio, and heater, having a local delivered value of twenty-five hundred and sixty-six dollars, according to Ella Broderick Wilson, chairman. The car has been donated by Dick Graves of the Nugget and tickets will go on sale early next week for the prize, biggest ever given at the local hospital party. Why a Ford? Thereby hangs a tale. The idea of using an auto as first prize was conceived by Mrs. Wilson. Archie Pozzi, Jr., who sells Fords, and Phil Roventini who peddles Plymouths, they approached Graves who agreed to buy one car. To decide which one, Pozzi and Roventini played a game of Keno. Phil, who chose the game, and up till then had been knocking off spots right and left on the Keno, had the first three numbers called and beamed broadly; but Archie, always a fast finisher, picked up one here, one there, and then the final two calls to win a gigantic contest four to three.

"I was robbed," cried the generous Genovese. "Pozzi took me in like he did the state legislature." (Archie was then in the legislature and still is.) "Virtue and merit always win for a worthy cause," calmly replied Archie, as he collected his fifteen cents from the Keno counter and permitted Roventini to buy drinks all around. Mrs. Wilson promised Phil that he could buy the first ten dollars worth of tickets on the Ford.

This went on, was an *extremely* successful party. There was a lot of publicity, and everybody donated things to the big drawing that they had for the party. I forget how much money was raised, but at that time, it was a good sized amount.

How would you describe Mrs. Wilson?

She was a tremendously wonderful person, very—very friendly, very outgoing, very civic minded. She was extremely cooperative with me in every way, and remained my friend all through the years. I haven't seen her in quite a while; I really should make it a point to go visit with her.

I see we've got a special Nugget menu that was printed for the Nevada Day Parade, the last of October in '54. And up at the top it says, "Please note we have not raised any prices for Nevada Day. This is the same good food we serve every day. On the bar we are serving Old Taylor, Old Crow, Seagrams 7 bar whiskey, just as we do every other day of the year." The reason I did this was that I had been told all the bars in town raised prices on Nevada Day, and I just couldn't see that. I couldn't see any reason to be charging people more on Nevada Day than you did on any other day. Not only that, they substituted cheaper

whiskeys for their bar whiskeys than what they normally would serve any other time of the year, so I accentuated this with this little piece printed on the first page of this menu. And it also says, "The Carson Nugget opened March 5, 1954, and has paid to date a total of fifty-eight thousand six hundred and ten jackpots." And under it, "Last Chance Joe says you gotta send out winners to get players." And then another little bit, "The Nugget in Carson City was opened in March of this year. Since then we have had to expand into the buildings on each side of the original Nugget. The kitchen has been completely modernized and enlarged. We have just installed a thirty-five-thousand-dollar ventilating and heating system," and believe me, at that period in time, thirty-five thousand dollars for air conditioning and heating was an enormous amount of money to be putting out, "including a fifty-ton Carrier compressor which is operated by fifty-horsepower motor. This completely changes the air in the Nugget every four and a half minutes. We have just opened our new Mahogany Dining Room. We found that a few people didn't enjoy the sweet music of the slot machines as much as we did, so now they have a nice, quiet place to dine." The present Carson City Nugget still uses this Carrier air conditioning compressor.

"The World's Rarest Collection of Gold Specimens: This gold was collected over a period of sixty years by the late Dr. Henry Menendez, and it was added to over the past thirty years by Mr. Charles McKibben of Sonora, California. This collection is valued at fifty thousand dollars and is insured in this amount." Then there was a reprint of the editorial by Lucius Beebe, "Return of Bonanzas," which I have read before.

What were some of the prices on that menu?

I'll read it to you. It was a special short menu for Nevada Day. "Baked ham, \$1.25; Plantation Chicken Shortcake, \$1.10; Swiss Steak, \$1.25." The Awful-Awful sandwich was 55 cents. "Chuckwagon Steak, \$1.35," that was choice round chopped meat, seasoned to your fancy and wrapped with smoky bacon, served with salad, potatoes, bread, and your choice of beverage. Then the Jackpot Special Steak, which was a tenderloin steak, for \$1.85. These prices are pretty hard to believe today.

I find some other little interesting clippings that we had here. August 9, 1955, from the Nevada *Appeal*; it's headlined: "Eighteen Hundred and Eighty-one Telephone Directories Here. Eighteen hundred and eighty-one new telephone books have been hand-delivered to subscribers in Carson City. Many new names, numbers and addresses have been added to the '55-'56 issue. Everyone is urged to refer to the new directory for the correct number." This hardly seems possible that there was only eighteen hundred and eighty-one telephones in the town.

During this first year or two there in Carson City, the city had a habit of scraping the snow into the center of the street and just leaving it there. Well, this would be a pile of snow eight, ten feet high, and naturally it would gradually get dirty and filthy looking. So, I just didn't like it; the city wouldn't remove it, so I hired a fella to take it out. And I see here there's an article—I don't have the date on it—where the city refused to pay a bill that I'd submitted to the city or I had John Savage, the man who removed the snow, submit it; it was a bill for thirtyfive dollars for hauling the snow away and they refused to pay it. They said, "Return the bill to Mr. Graves and let him pay it," which didn't make any difference to me [chuckling]. I was just aggravated that the city would allow this snow to sit there for three, four, five, six weeks, piled up eight, ten

feet high, right in the middle of the town. It made the town look terrible. And I didn't like it in front of the Nugget, and every year we cleared it away ourselves and paid for it.

Another little item was a column which was run in the *Las Vegas Sun* and other newspapers throughout Nevada called "From the North," dateline Reno, and it was by Mark Curtis. Mark Curtis worked for me for a while, and he's presently head of the public relations department for Harrah's and has done an extremely fine job at Harrah's. In—among other things that he talks about happening in northern Nevada: "My nomination for the room in Nevada with the most atmosphere, Dick Graves Round House Dining Room at the Nugget, cutest thing you ever saw. Incidentally, the menu states, 'We decline to accept responsibility for well-done steaks.'"

Here are a few grocery store prices from the Carson City paper of May third, of '56: "Round steak, 75 cents. a pound; pork steak, 49 cents a pound; ground beef, 3 pounds for 98 cents; new potatoes, 3 pounds for 19 cents, Kraft mayonnaise, 59 cents; canned potatoes, 3 cans for 39 cents." This was Kelly and Lindsay's Market in Carson City.

And we had a big Thanksgiving dinner in '55. This was tender, young Fallon turkey served with savory dressing, vegetables, cranberry salad, rolls, and choice of beverage, \$1.25. Along about this time we started the buffets. We had no room to put the buffets, so we would take a piece of plywood and set it over the counter and over the counter seats and the buffet was set on this strip of plywood. We served right from there. I see we ran an ad: "Regular Friday Night Fish Fry. All you can eat for 95 cents."

I remember one funny thing [chuckling] that happened at the fish frys. We had this lady that somebody noticed would keep going through the line, and so we kept watching her,

and what she was doing was putting food in her purse. She had a great big purse, and she would slip the food into her purse. So, we had to have a little heart-to-heart talk with her to get her to stop that.

The menu mentions Fallon turkeys. What is it about turkeys from Fallon that makes them any different from turkeys from—California?

Oh, I don't know. At that particular time Fallon was sort of noted for its turkeys. It's just like the special Fallon crenshaw melons. For some reason there were some people down there that raised especially good turkeys. Of course, then we didn't have the frozen processed turkeys like you have today that are specially raised and specially bred for being especially heavy-breasted and very tender. But these were real good turkeys. I see another ad on for the fish fry. This was November tenth, '55. The other ad was November twenty-third, that was 95 cents. Here I was chargin' a dollar for it—I must have lowered the price. I had fried shrimps, scallops, oysters, crab salad, baked beans, potato salad, cole slaw, garbanzo beans, tossed green salad, cottage cheese, macaroni salad. We really put out a beautiful buffet for one dollar. Now these buffets run five and six dollars, same—basically the same type of buffet.

How did you manage the buffet to keep the cold things cold and the hot things hot?

At that time we just used sterno, little cans of sterno under the pans, and pans with crushed ice for salads.

You've asked why we used the name Nugget. When Jim Kelley and I came down to Reno, the business that we bought was called the Picadilly. And it was owned by a man by the name of John Hickock—because I didn't

like the name Picadilly and we wanted to change it. At that time the Nugget in Vegas was a very successful place, and somehow or other we just between us decided to call it the Nugget. And of course at the same time I was opening Carson and Yerington, we decided to call 'em all the Nugget. It was rather, in a way, sort of a—I don't know whether you could call it unfortunate (as successful as the places were), but as time went on, that there were other Nuggets, and this was somewhat confusing as the years went on. In other words, there was the Nugget in Sparks and there was still the Nugget in Reno. There became a Fallon Nugget, which we didn't have anything to do with; there was the South Lake Tahoe Nugget, the North Lake Tahoe Nugget. This confused the issue because I was doing far more advertising than anybody else, and these people were—many tourists, of course, assumed that I had ownership in these other Nuggets. It was rather an unfortunate decision, but in a way maybe it was fortunate, who knows? The name is good, and we could tie it into the gold and the Golden Rooster and the gold display, and it had its advantages and yet through the later years it had some disadvantages. Right now the Nugget in Sparks is so well known and the name John Ascuaga is so well known and attached to it that I don't think it has any bearing on it at all. General public knows that he owns that Nugget and not the Reno Nugget.

When was it that you put your name in the—in the name? The Dick Graves' Nugget.

Probably about the first year in Carson City I didn't have the name in it. It think it was in early '55, I started using Dick Graves along with it. This, because I was no longer connected with the Reno Nugget and I wanted to distinguish it from the Reno Nugget, not

that there was anything wrong with the Reno Nugget, but I just wasn't operating it.

Now at that time did Jim Kelley use his name in the business?

Right at the start I don't think he did; a little later on he added it. I wouldn't know just when, but he does use it now. I know from talking to employees during those years that many, many people came into the Nugget in Reno thinking they were in my Nugget, thinking they were in the Sparks Nugget, the one they'd heard about, the one they'd read about. So, it was—after all, remember, we were out in Sparks, too; in those years, that was three miles east of Reno, and nobody knew where Sparks was and it was a pretty tough situation to bring people out there.

So, talking of Sparks I guess we'll sort of move along now into the point when along about the middle of '54 I leased the corner at Twelfth and B Street in Sparks. This was from a man by the name of McDonald; he had a furniture store in there. I had looked at this space a year earlier and had given it up because I had too much to do, and then my good friend, Bob Tillotson, was still with me in Carson, and I put him to work on it, and he went over there and negotiated the deal with McDonald for a satisfactory lease, and we leased the space. We leased also—right across the street there was a vacant building where there had been a drugstore, and we had all the equipment from Idaho stored in this space. This is the time, which I've already discussed, that I hired Ole Severson.

Ole Severson helped me from that time on in starting to put the Sparks Nugget together. Frank Green, of course, came in and drew some plans. We used much of the equipment that came down from Idaho. One particular item that was used was the bar, back bar,

which was refrigerated, and this had—this was the lower part of the back bar, not the upper structure—this had originally been in the Brunswick Cafe in Twin Falls, then was moved to the Brunswick Cafe in Sandpoint, and subsequently brought down to Nevada. Incidentally, it was still in the same place, same location in the building when we opened Trader Dick's in 1958. This was after we had moved over across the street. So this back bar really earned its money.

We put the Sparks Nugget together, and it was 50 foot by 140 feet; it had a bar, a coffee shop that seated sixty people—forty, fifty slot machines. Incidentally, as part payment from Kelley when I sold out to him, I got some slot machines. These slot machines were remodeled, and that's what we used in the Sparks Nugget. We had a crap table, Roulette wheel, and three, four "21s." We didn't immediately open with Keno; we did a little later on. I immediately started operating the Blackout Bingo, again, having to call it OGNIB because of the newspapers wouldn't accept the word Bingo. And it was a huge success right away. It just took right off.

The Sparks Nugget—everybody thought that I was making an extremely bad mistake moving into Sparks because there just was nothing in Sparks; it was a town of thirteen thousand people, and they just felt that nobody would go to Sparks. These were people that were in the gaming business that I had met during the time that I had come to Nevada; friends, some employees thought that it was a bad mistake, but I think what really sold me was one day, when Bob Tillotson was negotiating for this lease, I went over with him. We drove around the town and went into—there were a couple of small bars there with a couple of "21" tables in each. I went into one place, and there was a "21" table; they had a green light hanging directly over

the "21" - table, the dealer had on a green eye shade, and he had a newspaper spread out on the "21" table reading it. So [chuckling] when I saw this I thought, "Boy, this town's ripe for something."

In my research of the Nevada State Journal for material about the Nugget, I came across this news item: Thursday, March 17, 1955, Editorial, Reno-Sparks Freeway.

Freeways are coming, there's no doubt about it and some Reno residents, as well as residents of cities throughout the United States, will voice valid objections when the routes are selected. In the end the freeways will be built to benefit the communities and to accomplish the greatest good for the greatest numbers.

It has been proposed tentatively that an east/west freeway for Highway 40 enter Reno on the west at a point between 7th and 8th Streets, cross East 4th Street at a point near Prater Way junction in Sparks and continue east through Sparks on A Street, which is a block south of B Street, and north of the railroad tracks.

Were you aware of the coming of the freeway and the impact it might have on the Nugget?

No. I was simply too busy opening the Nugget. How prophetic that writer was. That's fantastic. I may have missed that item. But I see on February 25, 1955, an item from the [Reno] *Evening Gazette* where I had appointed the manager of the Nugget in Sparks to be John Ascuaga. John up to this time had been in charge of the food. In fact the article says, "Mr. Ascuaga has been associated with Dick

Graves, owner of the Nugget, for the last four years as food supervisor.” John was real young at this time to be moving in as a manager, but he did a super job right from the start of the Nugget in Sparks and continued to do it all the years that I owned it.

Was the college program that he attended at Washington State University one of the first in hotel management?

I wouldn’t [be] able to say that; I don’t know.

Cornell University is, I believe, the oldest, but Washington State must be the oldest in the West.

I would think it would be, yeah, because he wanted to be in the food and restaurant and hotel business, and that’s the place he selected to go.

Also, an interesting thing happened in April of ’55. Harolds Club had been giving scholarships to the University of Nevada for many years. For some unknown reason they just decided to quit the program, and so from the Nevada State Journal on April 26, 1955 is an article which I’ll read:

Graves Now Offering U of N Scholarships. Harolds Club Plan to Quit Program Brings Prompt Follow-up.

Dick Graves, owner of the Nugget in Sparks and Carson City, announced last night that he will take up two of the scholarships which Harolds announced yesterday it would discontinue. Mr. Graves said he would like to award four thousand-dollar scholarships to students from Sparks and Carson City where his businesses are located. He expressed

hope that other clubs throughout the state would pick up others of the thirty scholarships awarded yearly for the last decade by Harolds Club and award them on the same basis, possibly as Pat McCarran scholarships. “Harolds Club founded a wonderful institution that should not be allowed to vanish,” Mr. Graves said. However, with new gambling taxes and other expenses, the scholarship program is too large for one club to be able to handle alone. Mr. Graves said his decision to take up two of the dropped scholarships was made as he read the plans to discontinue the program. He said the scholarships in Sparks and Carson would continue to be awarded whether or not other casino owners decided to assume the remaining twenty-eight. “I hope that other clubs will also take over portions of the scholarship program so the deserving students will still be able to get college education at their state university,” Mr. Graves said. Although a comparative newcomer to Nevada, Mr. Graves said he felt that the scholarships should be to the University of Nevada alone. “The scholarships will be awarded on the same basis that they were awarded at Harolds Club. The program begun by Harolds has grown into one of the state’s finest institutions; I feel very definitely that its continuity should not be dropped.” Over the ten-year period, Harolds Club awarded thirty scholarships a year to Nevada students at a cost of more than a million dollars.”

I see also where two more casinos offer scholarships. These were picked up by Barney

O’Nalia of the El Capitan and Bud Simpson of the Bank and Capital Clubs in Ely. As far as I know, those were the only two that were picked up. We continued to give these scholarships all through the years that I owned the Nugget, and John Ascuaga has continued the program. I always thought it was one extremely worthy program and was very happy to have been a part of it. The selection of the winners of the program was not alone on their grades. They had to have a financial necessity for the continuation of schooling. So it might be that the top-grade student of the school would not be the winner of the scholarship because he didn’t have a financial necessity. I could not see awarding the scholarship to a student whose family could afford to send him to school. The winners were picked from top-grade students who could not afford to continue their schooling. I’ve received many nice letters from people that were winners of the program and people that completed the program over the years.

The winners of the scholarships were selected by the principal of the high school and the teachers. They met and decided themselves. I did not know who was to be the winner until it was announced to me; I had no part in the selection at all. And John Ascuaga still handles it in the same manner.

The names go forward, then, from the principal’s office to the superintendent, and the superintendent supplies a list of the recipients or those people worthy of being honored with a scholarship.

Yes, they have some process of deciding according to the grades and to the financial situation of the student and the family as to whether he or she should receive the scholarship.

During the time that you were giving the scholarships out, what one student has gained the most fame?

Back to the University of Nevada scholarship program, this is a letter from the University of Nevada, Office of the President, signed by Alice Terry, Secretary to the Board of Regents:

Dear Mr. Graves,

At the last meeting of the Board of Regents, President Stout presented for acceptance the scholarship program which you are making available to graduates of Sparks High School and graduates of Carson High School to attend the University of Nevada. The Regents accepted the scholarship grants on the conditions under which you are offering them. The Regents were very appreciative and asked me to thank you sincerely for your interest in this University.

This is dated May 8, 1956.

You asked if I knew anybody who had gone on to great fame or anything in the winners of the scholarships. Actually, I don’t at the moment. Perhaps I can come up with some before we finish this.

At this time did you employ college students?

No, not at that time we didn’t do that. That was done later on, and I’ll get into that a little later on. This was after we moved the Nugget across the street in Sparks.

Then your first college student, really, was John Ascuaga?

Well, he was a graduate, yes.

He didn't work for you while he was going to school?

No.

At any point?

No, he came to work for me the day he got out of school.

What about the frying pan that was found near the Lake Tahoe guest house? Tell me that story.

Well, that story leads to sort of another story. Flora was doing some digging out there for some planting or something shortly after we came up here and found this frying pan, and then she started finding small pieces of Chinese pottery. And then we found out that Mill Creek ran right alongside our property here, in fact, right through it; and in the early days, when they were cutting timber here, why, there was a Chinese camp in here with many Chinese living along the Creek. So apparently, this area that she was digging in had been kind of a trash dump. And she found lots of pieces of pottery and Chinese things, and one day she found a coin, a Chinese coin; well, she was quite excited about this, and we were all kiddin' her about her archeological find or diggin's and everything like that. So, a couple of years later, I was in Hong Kong and had gone over to an area they call Ladder Street and there's a lot of little small shops, a flea market type place, and one fellow was selling old Chinese coins, so I struck on the idea of buying some of these coins and bringing them home. And these were interesting coins, some of them three, four inches in diameter and some of them long, about five, six inches long made out of brass and pot metal. I bought quite a

few of them, brought 'em home, and then I had a few twenty dollar gold pieces. These were brand-new twenty-dollar gold pieces; I got six of them, and I found an old Chinese pottery jar, and I had this all together and toy plan was to put the twenty-dollar gold pieces in the pottery jar and seal it with sealing wax and then bury the pottery jar and the coins in the area where Flora was digging. So, I had put the jar and the Chinese coins and the twenty-dollar gold pieces in the bottom drawer of the stand by my bed under some clothes at the Tahoe house. And I never got to putting the thing together and getting it buried, and one day Flora came to me and she said, "Will you tell me what these things, these coins, are doing in your bed stand?" Well, the whole thing was blown to pieces. The end result was she got the twenty-dollar gold pieces and I got nothing out of it. So then, that's where the frying pan clock came from.

Incidentally, at lunch today we were discussing a little bit [about] the present complicated procedure in securing a gaming license in Nevada. When I got my gaming license in 1954, it was relatively simple. I went up and talked to a man by the name of Gallagher who was in the gaining department at that time and a very fine gentleman. We set down and talked for a while and had a few forms to fill out; they wanted a financial statement, and they did a little checking on me up in Idaho. I don't think they sent anybody up there; they did it by phone. And I received my license. It was, of course, for the Reno Nugget, the Carson Nugget, and the one in Yerington, all approximately at the same time; and then on December 19 of 1954, I was granted the license for the Sparks Nugget which was owned by the corporation called the Challenger. This was a corporation which we had transferred down from Idaho. But

there was no particular heavy investigation like there is today, which is certainly needed today, but in those early days it was actually quite simple.

So we were ready to open the Sparks Nugget, and as I said John Ascuaga had been appointed a manager. Ole Severson was working right under him, and we had our grand opening at the Nugget in Sparks on March 17, 1955. This was just about a year after opening in Carson City. You can well see how involved I was in 1954 and '55; here I was operating the place in Carson City—it was gain' like gangbusters and still putting one in in Sparks. We opened Sparks, as I said, on the seventeenth, on Saint Patrick's Day, and had a Saint Patrick's Day celebration. And Mayor Seth Burgess helped cut the ribbon and gave me the key to Sparks.

The coffee shop actually seated sixty-five people. There was a little item in the *Territorial Enterprise*, which is rather interesting:

The brand-new gambling saloon in Sparks, Dick Graves' companion place to his fabulously successful Nugget in Carson City, opened on Saint Patrick's Day in the grand manner with Mayor Seth Burgess of Sparks declaring a half holiday for the employees of city hall and then coming down himself to cut the green ribbon across the doorway as the official signal for the crowd to pour in. (And in quotes) "I never saw anything like it," Graves related, "when the mayor cut the ribbon, the place filled up and stayed full for four days, and it hasn't fallen off appreciably since."

This was on March 25, '55. Now I'm operating two places that are doing enormous business.

During the time of construction and after I opened the Sparks Nugget, I rented a small room in one of the houses there at night, generally every other night. This was done mainly so that I wouldn't be driving home late at night. We were living in Carson City at the time, and of course, I'd naturally be real tired and have to drive home because the business was twenty-four hours and I had to be there during the daytime to take care of business and had to be there at night to be with the customers and spend time on the floor. I continued to do this all the time that I operated the business in Sparks, even after I sold the Carson Nugget. When I later on remodeled the Sparks Nugget, I put in a small room upstairs where I could stay, and then later on when we put the big Nugget across the street, I had a room adjoining my office. And it worked quite well really. It allowed me to get home and be with my family practically every other night, and yet it kept me from driving home late at night when I'd be tired, and have the danger—the chance of having an accident.

What were the roads like between Carson City and Sparks at that time?

Well, they were not too bad. Of course, that section of freeway right out of Carson did not exist yet, had to drive around the old road, but it wasn't bad. It was a thirty-five-, forty-minute drive. And it never bothered me; I never pushed myself on it, and I just—it sort of gave me time to be away from business and time to think. I kept a notepad in the car and write down notes of things that I happened to think about and would want to take care of the next day.

What make of automobile did you have at that time?

Oh, I don't know. I had a Buick and a Continental, I believe, different times in that period. I can't quite recall.

Was the traffic very heavy at that time?

Oh no, not like it is today by any sense of the imagination. I have told the story about hiring Ole Severson. During the opening of the Nugget, he worked hard and long hours putting the Sparks Nugget together. This was actually good therapy for him because he was fighting his problem with drinking, and in the little workshop and tools that I bought for him for, he made lots of things for the Nugget and it gave him something to do and something to keep him away from gettin' in trouble. He was invaluable to me and to John in later years as a floor manager, and he was also in charge of all the construction work for John.

When we opened the Nugget it just simply took off. It was doing top-notch business practically from the day we opened. We used all the same gimmicks and promotional ideas that we'd used in Carson City, and they all seemed to work, especially the Bingo. We gave everything in the world that you can think of away: peacocks, donkeys, poodles, dogs, great huge baskets of groceries, anything in the world that I could come up with. We'd have some kind of a promotion and give these things away.

At this time what were the clubs in Reno doing? Oh, Harrah's, the Mapes, the other longtime clubs?

None of them had any of these type of drawings or promotions that I was using at the time. Another thing that we had that was of some advantage was—that we had learned in Idaho—was some different types of reel assemblies for slot machines. At the time that

I came to Nevada most of the slot machines in the other clubs were the standard type. For instance, we had a machine which was called the "27-way machine." This was so built that if you got three bars in any position in the windows, you won a jackpot. In other words, it could be diagonal or it could be across the top line, the middle line, the bottom line; there were twentyseven ways to win a jackpot out of eight thousand plays. This made the machine drop a lot of jackpots. And this particular machine was copied all over the state. In fact, I've got an ad here which I'll read a little later where a Las Vegas club advertised a brand-new idea in slot machines, the 27-way machine, and we'd had it for two years. These— all of these things put together are what made the Sparks Nugget and the Carson Nugget really go. When John came in, John Ascuaga, he took over. He did an absolute, top job in operating the Nugget for me there. I never had to be concerned about him in any way; he worked a lot of long hours, and was very well-liked by the employees and the customers, and had a good head on him. I was very happy with him as a manager. He, of course, had the advantage that he knew the food business inside out, and this was one thing that was always a good thing at the Nugget because we had absolutely top-notch food.

His role at that time was primarily the food service?

No, at this point he was manager of the Sparks Nugget. He moved right in as we opened the Nugget and became manager, March 17, '55. And of course he—if we had any food problem in Carson, why, he'd go over and help me on that, but at that time he was completely the manager; he had his hands full in a brand-new place like that to run.

About that time, a rather interesting situation developed. We found out we were short of parking space. Sparks had a parkway that ran down the middle of B Street, right in front of the Nugget, which consisted of about four or five blocks of what had been planned to be a nice park, which turned out to be nothing but a dirt pile with some dirty old benches on it that mainly were used by the bums that had come off of the railroad, hobos. The trees weren't trimmed; it was—there was practically no grass at all; it wasn't watered, wasn't taken care of. Well, this space looked extremely good to me as a parking space, so I went and talked to the city council about it; there was quite a number of discussions and meetings and we finally received permission to cut the trees down and make a parking lot out of the center section. We endeavored to get the city to pay for part of this, but they—there were a couple of the councilmen that couldn't see their way clear to do it. A few of the merchants helped a little bit on it, however, I paid for practically all of it—the paving, putting in the lights and even paid for the lighting, the power for the lighting. Eventually, we converted three blocks to parking in the same way. We paid for all of these, the balance of the paving and the lighting. In fact, John is still paying for the lighting (power) for those parking areas that go down the center part of B Street.

This gave us a lot of parking, and there were no parking meters in Sparks which was an extremely big thing. And I played this up very, very heavily. I bought an old parking meter and built a cage for it like you'd cage an animal in and put it on a stand right out at the edge of the curb in front of the Nugget with a sign over it which said, "Danger! Do Not Feed This Beast!" All of the ads that we had, we carried, had something to say about no parking meters in Sparks, and—or the

acres of free parking. At one time I offered to pay anybody if they would bring their Reno parking tickets which they had paid the city of Reno for over-parking; if they'd bring the parking tickets in to us, we'd give 'em the money for it and many of them did. But we pushed and pushed the fact that there were no parking meters in Sparks, and I must say that parking was one of the big things that contributed to the success of the Sparks Nugget, and I believe that it still does because they have plenty of adequate parking still. People just simply don't like to have to pay for parking, and they don't like to have to walk—they won't walk.

From time to time in this interview, I've mentioned several people who have contributed to my success. Now I'd like to give credit to the most important person in my life, my wife Flora. All through these years she's been a perfect wife in every way and a perfect mother in every way. You have to remember that I was away a great deal in Idaho, when I had my business scattered all over Idaho; and now in Nevada I was generally away from home every other night, and even though this had some advantages that I did get home every other night and we had a sit-down dinner with the family which I insisted on all through the time that they were home, still do—always have—we never eat piecemeal or eat one at one time. And it kept me, as I've mentioned before, from driving home late at night; I'd stay in Sparks and come home the next day. But it also meant that I had to be away many weekends; after all, weekends was when the business was busiest and so I—we lived at Lake Tahoe at this time; we had a home up there, and many's the weekend that I'd stay in Sparks Saturday night, get up and go to mass in Sparks and then come up Sunday and be Sunday at afternoon with the family or sometimes if it were a big weekend,

I'd stay down both days. So this meant that the family was alone quite a little bit, and it was certainly not easy for Flora in any way. She never complained at all, never any complaining, never any saying that I shouldn't do this, shouldn't do that; she always listened to my problems and did a super job in raising the children.

During all this time, all of these years, one thing that I insisted on was that once a year at least, that we would take a trip for a month or six weeks and get completely away, generally to some foreign country or to Hawaii. This traveling no doubt broadened my perspective and thinking, and I always came home with a pocket full of notes and new ideas. And you know, it was really funny, business always seemed to be better while I was away. This was especially true at the Sparks Nugget, because John was completely on the ball, and he worked long hours; and I always did feel that the place ran better when I was away than when I was there.

During all this time and all the time I was in business, Flora never had or wanted any part of the operation of the business. Her business was taking good care of the children and her family, and she did a superb job in this.

Did she have any input into what might be served in either Nugget?

Not particularly, but many times I'd come home with an idea for—of some new menu item, and we'd try it at home. She'd work with me, and we'd try it and maybe perfect it at home and then put it in operation at the Nugget. But, she really had no interest, and I didn't want her to have any interest in it. Her job was with the children and that was a full-time job in raising them.

How often did she come up to Sparks, just to visit?

Oh, many times she'd come down; we'd drive over and have dinner or something, or she'd come to Reno and come over and we'd have lunch or dinner together, either at the Nugget or some other place in town. We'd go to the Riverside to a show or—that was about the only place that had a show at that time. We might go downtown in Reno and walk around, visit the clubs. I don't mean that she stayed in Carson all the time, by any sense of the imagination. She came to Reno, and we—at that time, of course, she had to do most of her shopping in Reno because there were no large, good stores in Carson where she could buy children's clothes and things. She did most of her shopping in Reno. So any time she'd come over, why then she'd be out, and we'd have lunch or dinner or whatever. And the children came over quite often with her, and we'd all eat together in the Nugget or maybe go to the Riverside to a show.

I can't quite remember the stars, but the Riverside brought in some top-name entertainment. I know the Mills Brothers played there, the Marx Brothers, the Andrews Sisters. I don't know whether Liberace came in at that time or not. I know he played Harrah's a little later.

I believe Vaughn Monroe was—.

Vaughn Monroe was in. But they did have nice entertainment, and they had good food and a good operation. That's when Mert Wertheimer owned it and Ruby Mathis was with him, both very good casino operators.

I see in my file at the time of Sparks Nugget opening, that "held over" at the Majestic

theatre (that was at First and Center [streets] in Reno) was the picture *The Country Girl* with Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and William Holden. And playing the Riverside Casino was Patti Page.

During this time, what was Harolds Club doing that you particularly found favor with? It was just reaching its ascendancy about then.

Well, Harolds Club was one of my favorite haunts, because “Pappy” Smith operated quite a bit along the same line as I did. He did a lot of unusual things. And I used to go in and check Harolds Club out quite often because they were doing an enormous business at that time. They had some extremely heavy gambling, and they had a lot of slot machine play.

One of the things that Raymond Smith did, this is the grandfather, Raymond I., “Pappy” Smith as they called him—he used to walk around and give coins to the slot machine players, or he would go and step behind a “21” table and deal and let the customers see his hole card, and this created all kinds of interest. He would go around—he’d double all bets, just walk around through the casino and double all bets on the “21” tables or the Crap tables. Everybody that had a bet up, he’d just tell the dealer to double it. I copied quite a few of these ideas myself, and particularly the slot machine idea. I used to regularly pass out coins throughout the casino, and often get behind a table and deal for five, ten minutes and let them see the hole card or maybe let ‘em have an extra “hit” or something like that or just anything to let ‘em win; it really didn’t make any difference because they were gonna play it back anyway. And it created a good feeling, and it was the feeling that Harolds Club had created that

they were happy to see you win. And I tried to create the same feeling. I really picked that idea up to a certain extent from Harolds Club.

But you had this concept in Idaho, and you transferred it to Carson City and then to Sparks.

This is true, however, it was the same thing that Smith was doing, to a certain extent, and doing it, maybe, in a little different way. And I just copied it and elaborated on it from what I saw him doing because he was successful at it. I was never afraid to copy somebody’s idea if it was good.

I understand that Mr. Smith gave bus fare home if somebody was wiped out at the tables, is that true?

Yes, this is very true, and we did the same thing— many, many times; somebody would overextend themselves and couldn’t get home, we’d give ‘em the money to go home; wouldn’t even take a marker on it, just pay ‘em the money— give ‘em the money and let ‘em go home. Sometimes we’d find that they’d sneak around and get to a table and start playing again with it and then they didn’t get it a second time [laughing]. One thing we tried to do that I learned early in the game was that it was not—it was never good business to let anybody overextend themselves in playing. And if a customer had a certain limit, a thousand dollars, or maybe his limit was five hundred dollars, and that was set up, he was held to that limit and we didn’t let him go over that because if he did, he overextended himself, he hurt himself, and if he went away owing you too much money, then you probably lost him as a customer, and he would go to some other place to play.

So, I think today in many casinos, that this is one of the great problems, that they let the customer go too far; they let him overextend himself to the point to where he hurts himself. This is certainly not good.

And when he hurts himself, he hurts his family and—.

And eventually hurts you.

It's a vicious circle.

Yes.

At what time in your career did the "spy in the sky" come in, where you had to check your dealers?

Harolds Club had this in at the time that I came to Nevada. I had some in the original Nugget; but then in the new Nugget, I was the first casino to completely design the room to have the, what we call the catwalks with the twoway mirrors. And I put in an intricate system of catwalks, which are still existing in the Nugget, in the older part of the Nugget today, and are used constantly for checking the dealers and watching for somebody that's trying to cheat, mainly just to be able to watch and see how a person is dealing and correct them. If they're not holding the deck right or they're—something that they're doing wrong and aren't supposed to—but not doing in the right manner, why, then we go and talk to them and correct them on it. Or if we have something wrong (we find that some table—we suspect something's going on between a dealer and a player), with a catwalk you can put somebody right on it, right above the table and sit there and observe the whole operation; and if something's going wrong, you pick it up right

away and get it corrected. They're absolutely invaluable to the casino.

But when you arrived on the scene in Nevada, Harolds Club already had this installed?

Yes, they did; they had it in some of the places, in some areas in his club.

Now did he, as far as you know, originate that? Or did this come from Las Vegas?

I really don't know where it was originated. I've often wondered why supermarkets don't put it in; supermarkets have a tremendous problem with shoplifting. If they'd put a couple of catwalks right down through the middle of the ceiling where they could observe—have somebody in there observing the whole place, it would cut their shoplifting ninety percent. Just the idea of it being there—the customer would know that it was up there, and it would slow down the person that was planning to shoplift. When I put the catwalks in in the new Nugget—this was when we moved across on the south side of B Street—a lot of people were concerned about it, particularly a lot of my employees. They felt that the customers wouldn't like it, and my contention was that the honest customer wouldn't give a damn about it. The only customer that didn't like it was the dishonest customer or employee who was trying to do something to you. And many, many things have been straightened out through that catwalk. I'll explain some of that later on, some things that we did pick up directly as a result of the catwalk.

When you first installed it, how much time did you or one of your associates spend observing?

Well, we generally kept a man up there on every shift. And, many times I'd go up

if I thought something was wrong, or John would go up; maybe he had some big play on a particular table and he wanted to just sit up there and watch, see if they were handling it right. There's just so much that can go wrong in a casino that it's extremely important to be right on top of everything. Most casinos today now have catwalks, plus they have television which is monitored all the time, and it's an extremely necessary tool in a casino. Really couldn't operate without it. And again, it's not only to catch somebody that's cheating or a dealer that's cheating, it's to be able to observe how a dealer is dealing and correct them on mistakes that they're making and improve their performance.

All throughout the taping today, I've been looking at a sign that I believe you had made, and this sign says, "Sitting still and wishing makes no person great. The good Lord sends the fishing, but you must dig the bait." Can you tell me more about that?

Well, I don't know [chuckling]; that was in with some of these clippings. I think I had that in one of my offices at one time; it just—I liked the saying, and of course I've kind of followed that line of thought all through my life, that you have to go out after it; they aren't gonna give it to you. Nobody gives you anything; you have got to go out and dig for it and get it, and surely I've practiced that everywhere, as you've seen through this taping. It was true in Carson; it was true in Sparks. There was no business in the town of this sort, and we just created it and went out and got the customers. And in Sparks, I'd say fifty percent of our customers were from Reno and still are, fifty percent of the regular customers are out of Reno.

At that time, you depended primarily on a local clientele?

Yes, that was my backbone of the business. However, I did a lot of advertising in California papers. I had a big campaign went on for months; I ran small ads that said, "Where in the world is Sparks?" or "Who ever heard of Sparks?" And then I would go on to tell where Sparks was and that the Nugget was there. These ads ran in newspapers in Fresno, Merced, Stockton, San Jose, all over the whole area of northern California.

So now about this time, we'd only been in the Sparks Nugget a very short while, well, I realized I *had* to have more room. On the east side of the Nugget was a twenty-five foot building which was the Peterson Drugstore. This was operated by a gentleman who at that time was about sixtyfive. He, unfortunately, had quite an affliction in that his head shook and it was hard for him to speak. He stuttered in a manner, along with his head shaking. So I approached him with the idea of buying the drugstore. Well, he just couldn't think of retiring, and he didn't think he should; his wife helped him in the store; it was just a little "Mom and Pop" operation. Anyway I talked to him and sort of convinced him that it might be smart for him to rent me the building, and he had money saved, and take life a little bit easy. He eventually did this, just in a matter of a few months and sold me the drugstore. I had a big sale and sold out all the stock—everything that was in it and stripped it and cut a big archway in and moved in, enlarged the casino and put in—at that time put in Keno.

Frank Green supervised this?

Yes, Frank Green did all of my architectural work. And he was particularly good at that type of work, remodeling and all that; he was a very good friend of mine and meant an awful lot to me and to the success of the Nugget. At

that time, that particular building didn't go clear back to the alley; it only went back about maybe about eighty feet, so that we only used that much space. A little bit later on— well, it was on July first of '56, we opened another Round House, an exact duplicate of the one in Carson, both in decor, seating arrangement and type of cooking and menu. We had the same menu, then, in both places because I was still— I was operating both the places at that time.

The enlargement, of course, went extremely well. I had big celebrations and everything for the opening of the new space. And then we did all these things so fast it seemed like; it seems extremely fast as I think of it now. The Round House in Sparks did extremely well right from the day it opened. We didn't intend to open it for lunch and in just a matter of weeks here we were opening for lunch, and we put the coffee shop menu in there for lunch.

About this time, I bought another club in Carson City called the Senator Club. This was from George Cannon, and if you remember he's the man who was complaining about all my giveaways. And this was a small club; I only kept it for oh, two and a half months, three months maybe. It did some nice business, but it just was too small; there was no way to expand, and I sold it to some folks from San Francisco, a lady by the name of Stella Vincent and William Duff in. They went on to operate it and did very well with it.

Along about this time, we'd come to realize that Sparks had a great deal more potential than Carson City had, and I felt that I was spreading myself pretty thin trying to operate both places. So, I made up my mind to sell Carson and concentrate on Sparks. By this time, I had started buying some of the houses that were on the south side of B Street. One by one I started buying these. These houses

were built by the Southern Pacific Railroad when they moved the roundhouse or the repair buildings for the SP from Wadsworth to Sparks; all of these houses were built in that whole row on the south side of B Street by Southern Pacific.

One by one, I went in and started to buy them, and gradually ended up buying the whole block across from the Nugget. I was in the process of doing this at the time that I made the decision to sell the Carson Nugget. I ran some ads, and it so happened that there was an auditor that was working for me by the name of Dick Abbott. He had taken Margaret Pinneo's place who was my secretary and accountant that had come down from Idaho. And he and his brother-in-law by the name of Richard Pogue and Chester Armstrong went together and bought the Nugget, paying a half million dollars for it. This was two and a half years after I started it from nothing. At the same time, I sold the Senator Club, at the same date. In the Carson Nugget I sold to Armstrong and Pogue and Abbott and since none of them had had any experience in the gaming business except Abbott who had been an accountant for me, I agreed to stay on in an advisory capacity for one year. And some of the key employees stayed on; among them was Dud Dillingham, Ollie Balmer and Pete Carr. These young men had come down from Idaho with me. They did stay there for quite a while. Pete and Ollie eventually came over and went to work at the Nugget in Sparks.

I mentioned about the matter of parking, that we even offered to pick up parking tickets from Reno people that had been fined for overtime parking, and I have an ad showing a parking ticket and that we'll pay these overtime parking tickets. And then there was a piece in the paper (in the Reno paper) which read—this was following this offer—read:

Record is Set for Collection for Meters: Eight hundred and thirty-one dollars in a single day is reported by officials. Overtime parkers set a new record in the payment of tickets Tuesday as eight hundred and thirty-one dollars poured into the tills of the municipal court. The court clerk said the previous record in parking tag payments was a paltry eight hundred and nine dollars. Technically more than nine hundred and thirty-one sifted into the county clerk's office, but official figures are based on three P.M. Court attaches wondered if the all-time record might not be slightly appalling to the Nugget casino in Sparks which advertised yesterday that it would cheerfully pay all overtime tickets turned in by Reno motorists within twenty-four hours of the date on which they were issued. The casino's advertisement judiciously hedged, "This offer may not last long."

However, next day I ran an ad: "Fantabulous offer still goes, bring your Reno overtime parking tickets to the Nugget in Sparks. We will pay your fine for you. Overtime parking tickets only. We are not worried. Bring 'em in."

We started dealing for the property on the south side of B Street, which had been built by the Southern Pacific for their employees. These people were happy to move because it was not too desirable a place to live. However, gradually as I bought one piece and then bought another piece, why naturally the price of the property started slippin' up. However, it was really quite amazing—it involved an enormous amount of time dealing with these people because while I could make my mind up in pretty much of a hurry, why, it was quite a difficult decision for them to make about

selling a house. They had to find a place to move to, and it wasn't the easiest thing in the world for them. But one thing I'll certainly say is that everybody was very fair and cooperative with me, and I was with them. I remember one lady, her name was Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas. She had a large two-story house which she had decided she wanted to move, and for some reason they didn't get the new foundation in when they were supposed to and she had agreed to be out at a certain time. She was an elderly woman and had problems with the people that were gonna move the house and all, so she came and talked to me and I told her just go ahead and stay there. And then she had to come to me again and I told her well fine, stay there, as bad as I wanted to get the house out of there and property cleared off. But I still went along with her because she was such a nice person. She finally got the house moved, and every Christmas she would write me a nice Christmas card and thank me for being so kind to her and letting her stay on the property as long as she did.

As time went on, I bought all the houses in three and a half blocks on the south side of B Street. This was a big job because these were all individual deals and all individual negotiations. While I had a real estate company that was helping me on it, naturally, I had to enter into the final negotiations and work in and around each deal in order to complete them. I was able to buy everything except one piece of property, which was on the corner just west of the Nugget, which was owned by a man by the name of Dolan. This was owned by uh—can't remember Mr. Dolan's first name. He was quite an elderly gentleman; however, his son—I believe it was his adopted son, Murray Dolan—apparently, bought the house from him and then I was dealing with him. And to make a long story short, we were just never able to come to an

agreement, and consequently he kept the property and eventually built a building and a casino there. The casino—he's not operating the casino any more—he had leased it not long ago to a man by the name of Pick Hobson, and just recently now I see Pick Hobson has sold the lease to somebody else. Apparently, it isn't working too well. But it was kind of a bad situation because he opened a casino; he had no parking, and he was using the Nugget Motor Lodge parking for his customers; and it still sits there today, the Gold Club. This is a good many years after I bought all that other property.

Another excellent promotion that we had in Sparks, and this was along in February, March, April of 1955—it's what we called the Mr. Mystery Contest. We offered a 1956 fourdoor, Mercury hardtop as the prize, and we created a whole bunch of clues as to who Mr. Mystery was. And his voice would come on radio spots. These were actually taped by the man who was Mr. Mystery. And, for instance, they'd read— here's clue number nine: "The Prince of Monaco has Grace, he has his money too; but as I have, he has something which few others do." Clue number thirteen: "A cigar has Groucho Marx, a cigarette has Franklin D., a pipe for Popeye the Sailor, which do you picture me?" We had clues in the paper everyday, we had clues on the radio; from time to time, we'd print up all of the clues that had been run up to that period of time. I forget how long this went on, but there was only one person that figured out who Mr. Mystery was, and that was Mrs. Paul Davis, who lived at 1836-1/2 C Street in Sparks. Mr. Mystery was Art Bernard, the warden of the Nevada State Prison. It was a real good promotion. We only did it the once, however; I didn't repeat it. Once something like that's been done, it's kind of lost its zip. This four-door Mercury hardtop was valued

at four thousand dollars at that time, I see in the ad.

That was the grand prize?

Yes, I think there were others; we had other drawings and prizes that connected with it. I don't exactly remember what those were. Some of these clues they could get only by coming to the Nugget, some they could get only by listening to the radio, some they could get only by reading in the newspaper. And it was very difficult as you can see since there was only one winner.

Here are just a few things I noticed that— from some of these clippings that we gave away at the Sparks Nugget. "Mystery Jar of Money" was awarded. It was a huge jar with all kinds of money in it. Those were for drawings. "Poodle Dog Night," two hundred and fifty dollars worth of stuffed poodle dogs. "Tonight, Free Groceries, hams, turkeys. Grand prize, complete, One Uranium Prospecting Outfit, Geiger counter instruction book, official yearbook, and everything else you need to hunt uranium."

"Country Store Night; Red Dachshund puppy. This lovable pet has nine champion ancestors." Thursday night "Doit-Yourself Night; three complete carpenter tool sets, hammer and saw, chisels, drills, the works. Total value, a hundred and thirty-five dollars.

Then we had jackpot drawing—"Jackpot Day; three hundred dollars free." Tickets were given on all jackpots and you won hundred dollars at five, nine, and twelve p.m. This was a three-day celebration to celebrate the opening of the new and enlarged Nugget. "Pari-mutuel Blackout Bingo." At this point we started what we called "Night Owl Specials," 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.; spaghetti and meatballs, 69 cents; ham and eggs, 69 cents; chicken-fried steak, 69 cents. This was to bring people mainly

that worked in the casinos and late-night customers out to Sparks, and it worked.

“Thanksgiving Party,” ten free turkeys. “Deer Contest”— we continued the deer contest that we’d started in Carson. They were extremely successful in Sparks.

“Giant Mystery Pumpkin containing over a hundred dollars. Free prizes all evening. Open house, 7:30 p.m.” This was for Halloween. “Giant Harvest Party. Thursday, October 20. Gift boxes, hams, turkeys. Grand prize, piggy-bank filled with money.

So, you name it, we gave it away!

The prizes that you offered, were they purchased at wholesale?

Some of them were, but generally I tried to buy them all from local merchants. Now, like the poodle dogs, why, I’d have to go get those from some supply house, but the groceries we bought from different grocery stores. One deal we had—one big deal we had was one where the winner got all the groceries that he or she could collect in a shopping basket, in eight or ten minutes, in a grocery store. That was a big, a big thing. I see we ran free bus rides from Reno to Sparks. They could take the Reno bus that drove over there and drove from Reno to Sparks, and we’d pay for their ticket. We’d just come up with anything that brought people into the Nugget.

“Country Store Night” with a giant basket of groceries. This was a wire—like a chicken wire that was put around a framework that was about three and a half to four feet in diameter and six feet high, and was completely filled with groceries. Another time, we gave a carload of groceries away. I bought an old cheap car for a hundred dollars, and we filled it absolutely full of groceries, completely full, and they won the car and the groceries. It was parked right out in front of the Nugget. And

the winner of the drawing won this carload of groceries. This created a lot of interest. It had a lot of groceries in it; I forgot how many.

The automobile, was that purchased at dealer’s cost?

No, I don’t think at dealer’s cost, but naturally I got some kind of a deal on it. I don’t remember just what.

Tell me about the type of audience that the Sparks Nugget appealed to.

Well, I think the easiest way to say is just it was every walk of life. It was the businessman, the lawyer; the mayor ate in there practically every day. We did a big business from Reno. Reno businessmen came over there because they could park, and they liked the food. At that time, there were quite a few people still with the Southern Pacific Railroad in Sparks, and we did a lot of business with the railroad people—engineers, and conductors, and people that worked in the roundhouse, all different branches of the railroad. We did a big business with construction people. At one time, we had payroll check drawings; when they cashed their check, they got a slip of paper showing the amount of their check. That was, they would write their name and address on this piece of paper, drop it in a big drum, and we would have a drawing once a week, and the winner would get double the amount of his paycheck. This has been used in a lot of casinos. In fact, the Nugget has just reinstituted it now and has a payroll check drawing. They get to spin a Big Six Wheel for certain amounts of prizes for cashing their payroll checks there. Consequently people came in from all over to cash their paychecks if they get a chance at this drawing once a week.

We had really just a complete cross section of everyone. We gradually built up lots of California trade, lots of out-of-town trade that continually repeated, and there's customers in the Nugget today that come from California, Idaho, and Washington, mainly California—that come to the Nugget and don't go anywhere else. In fact, a funny thing happened the other day. I was coming back from San Francisco and a man and lady were sitting next to me on the plane, and the lady was talking about getting reservations to see Glen Campbell at Harrah's, and then she said, "Oh, we've got to call the Nugget too."

And then he says, "What day do we go to the Nugget?"

And she said, "On Thursday." So, with that I introduced myself, and she says, "Oh, my goodness," she says, "we always stay at the Nugget," and she says, "unfortunately, the travel agent couldn't get us in this week for"—this was on a Saturday—"they couldn't get us in today and we can't get in there till Thursday." She says, "We hardly ever go anywhere else." So this was rather interesting, you know, to hear this, that they had the room only for one day, so I gave 'em a note to Gil Pedroli—that's the manager of the lodge who's been there ever since I was. And of course, he would arrange for them to stay as long as they wanted to after they came over. The travel agent had been able to get 'em in the Continental Lodge. But like I was saying, this couple was from San Diego, and yet they've been coming to the Nugget, she said, for fifteen years. And I questioned 'em why, and they said, "Well, we just like it out there. It's just nicer and it's friendly and the food's good; and we just like it, that's all, period!"

You mentioned the travel agents. I'm wondering how much work you did and how much

work is now being done with travel agents by casino operators. I have here a clipping from the Sunday San Francisco Chronicle, and it's an ad from Betty's Tours. Transportation by California and Nevada Golden Tours, and it's promoting both the MGM Grand Hotel and John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel-Casino. Now how—when did that piggy-backing start? Where they're promoting two different places.

Well, I never did this; this has been a program of John's for some time. It used to be in combination with Harolds Club, I believe. Betty's Tours, we actually used Betty's Tours way back. They've been a very good people to do business with, and the California-Nevada Golden Tours, the one that runs the buses, that's owned by Jim Wood in Reno who's an old-time friend of mine and, incidentally, the man that I bought the bus from, which I converted into my motor coach home, which I'll tell the story of later. He still owns the California-Nevada Golden Tours. I don't quite know myself why this combination, but it just gives the people a selection of which place they want to go.

And then on the other side, it's Harolds Club and the Nugget.

Well, this is another company, and this is a drive-up package—they come up themselves and the motels cost them twenty-two dollars a person double occupancy, and then they receive a bonus back of coupons and cash giveaways at Harolds Club and the Nugget. There's quite a bit of this now out of the Bay Area, has been for quite a few years. Yes, there's Trailways Buses also going into the Nugget. Cost nineteen dollars and twenty-five cents round-trip, and they get an eight-dollar cash refund from the Nugget when they come in. I see

John has Red Skelton on right now, again. He's one of the greatest—greatest of the great entertainers.

When you were operating the Nugget in Sparks and in Carson City, to what extent were comps used?

Oh, probably about the same as they are now. This was one other thing that I did; I never sat down in the coffee shop counter and ate unless I would pick up everybody's check at the counter. Or I might just walk down and pick up everybody's check in the whole coffee shop for no good reason. Naturally, we would comp good customers, good players, which is still done in all the casinos. We had a situation where we gave a raincheck every time they cashed a payroll check; they got a raincheck, we called it, which was good for a free drink. All kinds of things like that that were done in a complimentary manner.

And in turn, this always brought the business back and you got it back in kind anyway at the machines or at the tables.

Well, you hope so; you didn't get all of it back in any respect, but it was naturally a promotion which created a good feeling, created the feeling that you were—happy people were there and that you were free and easy and it was a nice place and people [were] happy that they were recognized, that they had their check picked up and things like that. It's still done in all the casinos, all over Nevada; it's a big item.

During the early time in Sparks, right after I moved to Sparks, which was in '55, or opened in Sparks I should say, naturally, we had somewhat of a problem in bringing people to Sparks because all the casinos

were in Reno at this time. This is why I did a great amount of various types of promotion work and carried on some of the things that had been successful in Carson City, like the Blackout Bingo, and the Country Store Night, various things of this type.

Shortly after I opened, I conceived the idea of having a flagpole sitter. Now I don't remember just exactly how I got this idea, but in any event, I advertised in the San Francisco papers and the local papers, Sacramento papers, and other papers in California, for a flagpole sitter. This advertisement was picked up by the AP and UP, and stories went out all over the country that I was making an offer for a flagpole sitter. I see one article here that is datelined Sparks and goes out under the AP dateline, which means it was picked up by papers all over the country. Says:

Dick Graves is convinced a good portion of the American public has a secret passion to sit on flagpoles. Two weeks ago Graves offered five thousand dollars to anyone who would sit on a pole in front of the Sparks Nugget for six months. Since then he has been deluged by hundreds of letters, telegrams, telephone calls, and personal applications. "If I could just get all the people who want to sit on flagpoles inside the club, I'd make a fortune," said Graves. Why do people want such a job? Mainly money. But here is the way they expressed it in their letters of application. "I'm not quite as photogenic as an eighteen year old female in a bikini, but for six thousand dollars I will sit on your flagpole for six months even if there was a carpet tack in the very tip of it." This came from a forty-four year old Reno salesman. Wrote a Buena Park,

California woman: "I will definitely stay two months and even six, if an obstetrician is furnished in January. I would be the first woman to deliver a baby atop the flagpole.

These are just a few of the examples I got. I was really just overcome by phone calls, people coming to see me, letters, wires, everybody wanted to sit on a flagpole. One lady came up from down in southern California after we'd already found the man that we wanted to use and was absolutely indignant that we'd already found somebody and put up a big fuss and wanted me to pay for her transportation home.

The man I selected was a fellow by the name of "Happy" Bill Howard. He was one of the applicants, and actually, at the time, he was sitting on a flagpole in Hermosa Beach, California. In a news clipping it says:

Happy Bill slipped off the Hermosa Beach pole at midnight Thursday to apply for the Sparks job. Another man took his place, and he isn't sure whether or not Hermosa Beach residents know yet that a switch has been made.

Apparently, my offer was more than he was getting on the pole at Hermosa Beach. He had set a world's record of a hundred and ninety-six days atop a flagpole in Portland, Oregon in 1953. So, he was somewhat experienced. He was actually from Venice, California. My attorney, Paul Laxalt, drew up a contract with him. Incidentally, Paul said it was the first time he'd ever drawn up a contract between a casino and a flagpole sitter!! But we drew up a contract where he got so much if he stayed up regularly. He was getting—see, the original

deal was his wife was to get a hundred and twenty-five dollars a week, was to be mailed to her, and a hundred and ten was to go into escrow, which he got if he stayed up the full time and broke the record.

So, we naturally had to have a flagpole erected, and I decided to have Frank Green design the flagpole. And then a news item dated July 25, 1955 says:

The man who drew the plans for a three million, two hundred thousand-[dollar] hotel, has just completed drawings for—so help us—a flagpole for a flagpole sitter. Frank Green, whose plans for the new Holiday Hotel in Reno are already being carried to construction, has completed an architectural drawing for Dick Graves' flagpole.

This was sixty feet high, and Frank designed the bottom of the flagpole with molded plaster and it was painted gold, so it looked like a gold nugget. It was actually six feet square, had a regular, big beach umbrella, had a chemical toilet, sleeping bag, air mattress, radio, television, telephone, and that was about it. Happy Bill went up at eight p.m., August 4, 1955, and the Sparks mayor, C. E. Richards, was there that night to shake hands with Happy Bill and send him up. He didn't—they were talking—everybody joked about how he had to go up—climb up the pole too, but Richards, of course, didn't do that.

It created a tremendous interest. The telephone company immediately put a line up the pole, so that we could have a telephone up there for Happy Bill. We had a speaker at the bottom of the pole where people could talk to him. Incidentally, this pole was put up in what is now the parking section, across from

the Nugget, and was directly across from the old Nugget on B Street.

This would be where the convention center is now?

No, no, right straight across from what used to be Trader Dick's. The promotion was an enormous success in every possible way. He was—Happy Bill was on the radio eight, ten times a day. Disc jockeys would phone him. Every morning he would tell what he had for breakfast; he'd announce what the noon specials at the Nugget coffee shop were; he received hundreds and hundreds of letters, telephone calls from all over the United States. People sent him various presents. We had press coverage all over the United States, even into foreign countries. We had special nights when we'd have "Happy Bill Howard Night"—we'd have some special kind of a drawing. The newspaper coverage was great on it, and of course we played up everything that came along to make this thing really, really work. I don't think there's any question at all but what it established the presence of the Nugget in Sparks and helped tremendously for its original take-off and original start. We even had some kids try to set fire to the flagpole. They were teenagers, eighteen, or nineteen. Charges were placed against them, and I don't really ever know how it came out. But they did actually have the pole on fire, which wasn't a very good thing to do, and Happy Bill was very excited at that time.

I see a picture and the clippings here of the newspaper boy delivering the morning paper to him. It was pulled up on a rope that was on a pulley. Had a story where he watched the World Series on his television set. A story of Cliff Young, when he was representative in Congress talking to Bill—Happy Bill Howard from the loudspeaker at the bottom of the

pole. Another picture of him—Mrs. Lloyd Wilson, this is the former Ella Broderick from whom I bought the Broderick Bar where I put the Nugget in Carson City. She was selling Happy Bill tickets for the drawing for the Ford that I had provided for the Carson Hospital, donation drive. This was on the forty-second day of his pole sitting. He just had a hundred and fifty-four days to go. Also, Happy Bill repaired toys. Around Christmastime, we had a big box at the bottom of the pole, and people would bring broken toys. He would—we got a whole bunch of tools and soldering irons and everything he needed, and he'd repair "toys for tots." So we had a big campaign on this, and it was unbelievable all the things that he fixed up there— wagons and bicycles and tricycles and everything else. They'd haul them up on the cord in baskets, and he would work on them up on the top of the pole. Of course, all of these various things carried some kind of news item; it continually brought us publicity, not only in the local papers, but in the—in papers particularly in the West.

His wife was pregnant at the time that he went up, so after baby was born, his wife came up from Venice, when the baby was one month old and was placed in a basket; the baby was hoisted up so Happy Bill Howard could see his new daughter. This was on November 8, 1955.

I see a large photograph in a news clipping here of Happy Bill looking at a calendar, and he's pointing to February twenty-fifth. This is the day that he would complete his contract calling for two hundred and four days:

Sparks, - Nevada, February 16, 1956. Happy Bill Howard, champion flagpole sitter, registers surprise over proclamation by city of Sparks naming February 25, as Happy Bill Howard Day. Howard will complete

his contract calling for two hundred and four days atop a sixty-five foot pole opposite Dick Graves' Sparks Nugget on the twenty-fifth. Mayor Ed Richards officially proclaimed the day last week. Final arrangements have been completed to take Howard off his towering perch by helicopter. The copter will bring Happy Bill to the ground where he will be greeted by city officials and the public.

We had to bring this helicopter clear up from Los Angeles because there were no helicopters in this area. So, he was lifted off and taken down; they cleared out the cars in the parking area, and he was brought down, and the mayor and the council and several hundred people were there to greet him as he came down. He had a huge beard, looked very well, and had survived the ordeal in great style. After this—after he came down, he was around the Nugget quite a little bit greeting and talking to people. He went to—I see an item here where he visited Susanville. He visited the newspaper over in Susanville, shows him in the pressroom. And he went around to a lot of towns and spoke to Rotary clubs and Kiwanis clubs and Lions clubs, and thereby we got additional publicity, of course, out of his stunt.

Funny thing, I hadn't heard from Happy Bill for all these years until June of this year. And he called me from Las Vegas, and said that he was trying to make a deal with someone in Vegas to go up on a pole for a year. His clippings of the Nugget stunt had all been lost in a fire, and he wanted to know if I still had mine. Apparently, he never made any deal with anybody in Vegas. So, I don't know whether he's still living in Vegas or just where he is.

Physically, what did Happy Bill look like when you first saw him?

Well, he was a clean-shaven, rather normal looking person. I don't know—he must have been about five-foot-ten or eleven, weighed a hundred and, I'd say, a hundred and sixty pounds, something like that. Looking at his pictures here, he's entirely different looking when he came down, of course, because he had this full beard.

What color was the beard?

Black. He did a good job, an excellent job. He never got grouchy, never complained about anything, and cooperated with us in every way; he fulfilled every agreement that he had with me to do the job he was supposed to do and the promotion proved to be extremely good in every way.

How old a man was he?

I would say at that time he was about thirty-five, thirty-six years old. I don't have his age here, but approximately that.

This was his career?

Yes, he had done this a number of times. Once in Portland, and at the time I hired him he was in California on a flagpole.

What kind of television coverage did the event receive?

Oh, it was on TV when he went up and of course, when he went down—when he came down there were pictures of the flagpole from time to time on—shots on TV, so then they would be interviewing him on the phone line.

Really, more work was done with the radio because it was more convenient than with television.

Now during that time the weather must have been rather inclement.

Oh yes, he had some—he had some lousy weather. We had an arrangement where he could put kind of some tent sides up, and he had a big beach type umbrella. And, electric heater up there, and so he was comfortable enough and he had heavy clothes. But he was up there all through the winter.

Did he do any daily exercising?

Oh yes. He had regular set of calisthenics that he did every day; he'd have to.

How large was the platform?

Six feet square. So it wasn't very big [chuckling].

You fed him, what, three times a day or more often?

Oh yes. He could call over and get anything he wanted at any time. But he generally had his breakfast, lunch and dinner and maybe something late in the evening. He'd call over, and the busboy or somebody'd bring it out and hoist it up to him. And we had a phone inside the Nugget where people could talk to him. And he had a telephone—special telephone number where, it was published so that people could call in from anywhere they wanted to call. He received calls from all over the United States. And, many goofy, oddball calls, and people just visiting with him, and wanted to know what he was doin' this for and

everything. And he was the type of guy that had an answer for everybody. So, all in all, it was a great promotion.

Among the unusual gifts that he received, do you recall any particular one?

No, I don't. People knitted sweaters for him and stocking caps, gloves, and they were sending him—they'd send him books and magazines and all kinds of things. Some cakes were made for him and sent up. There was always something like this going on, and practically every day somebody was coming in with something for Happy Bill and it was taken out and sent up to him. [Laughing]

Tell me about how the housekeeping chores were done?

Well, naturally the residue from the chemical toilet was taken down every so often, and he kept the place clean himself. Nobody went up at all. After all, he didn't have a very big space to keep clean. [Laughing] His laundry—his clothes were taken down, and we'd launder 'em and send em back up.

He certainly couldn't let the newspapers pile up.

Oh no, all of these things, everything went up and down. We had a regular pulley.

Like a dumbwaiter?

No, just on a—just a rope on a pulley and pulled the things up to him and back down, just in a basket. Just like his little baby went up.

Now the child, did you say that was a boy or a girl?

It was a daughter named Teresa Ann Howard. She'd now be twenty-three years old; wonder where she is? Here I have a picture of her being taken up at the age one month, to see her father on the top of a flagpole.

With Happy Bill up there on a six-foot-square platform, in your contingency plans did you have a doctor on call or a dentist? Was there any medical emergency during that time?

No, there was no medical emergency at all, and of course that wouldn't have been any problem at all. If he'd gotten sick, why we'da just hoisted a doctor up to him. He was hale and hearty during the whole time.

Suffered no colds?

No, nothing—which was very convenient [chuckling]. don't know whether very many doctors would have liked to have gone up, but I could have found one. Certainly he couldn't have come down because it would—he would've broken his contract.

Did he have a pair of binoculars up there? Being sixty-five feet up in the air he'd have a pretty good view.

Yes, he did have binoculars. In fact, he spotted quite a few fires in Sparks and called the fire department and was the first one to call them. I think it was three or four fires that he spotted and called the fire department.

Tell me more about this contract that you had drawn up between yourself and Mr. Howard.

Paul Laxalt had quite a laugh when I went over and asked him to draw up a contract between myself and Happy Bill Howard, the flagpole sitter. However, he did draw up a five-

page contract in which Happy Bill agreed to stay up not less than two hundred and three days. And, "so it is understood that the first party has represented to the second party that the present world record for flagpole sitting is one hundred and ninety-six days. It is the intention of the party hereto that he shall and will remain upon said flagpole for a period of at least one week in excess of the world record." And then we even had a provision that if it should be determined that the world record was more than that, a hundred and ninety-six days, that Happy Bill would stay up enough to break any other existing world record.

Oddly enough, I don't believe that this is in the *Guinness Book of World Records* and why it isn't, I don't know. At that particular time, the *Guinness Book of World Records* was not as popular as it is now, and I don't suppose we even thought of doing anything about getting it in. We agreed to furnish him all his clothing and food. He also agreed to—that during the hours between ten a.m. and two p.m., three p.m. and six p.m., and seven p.m. and eleven p.m. "of each and every day during the period set forth, he would remain in and upon the platform for not less than fifty minutes of each hour." In other words, so that people could readily see him from the ground unless prevented from doing so by inclement weather. We agreed to furnish a very sturdy [laughing] flagpole, not less than thirty feet in height; it was actually sixty-five feet. And, "the first party specifically assumed and undertook all risk of loss, damage, injury of any nature whatsoever during his performance."

Let's see here, I've already mentioned the amount and the money that was to be put in escrow. "In the event that the first party shall be prevented from remaining aloft and

upon the said flagpole for the period here and before mentioned because of an act of God, an unavoidable accident or a catastrophe, the force of law or any act of omission by second party or serious illness diagnosed by a duly licensed MD, then in such event, first party shall be entitled to receive and second party agrees to pay one-half of all money therefore paid into escrow. None of the contingencies named in this paragraph shall include minor illness, fatigue or indisposition from any cause whatsoever. And additional and material promise and agreement of the first party is that during all times while he is before the public and on the premise of the second party, he shall use no offensive or abusive language or action. He shall not make any advertisement of any person, product or service, or any person or persons whatsoever except as expressly sanctioned by the second party. He shall express no political, religious or philosophical attitudes or opinions while performing his agreements hereunder.

In it also I had the full right to use and exploit the name of Happy Bill Howard in any advertising and news releases. I'll certainly have to say that Happy Bill lived up to every bit of this and cooperated in every way to make the whole stunt the success it was.

How did you determine what the existing flagpole sitting record was at that time?

Well, I suppose we got that information from Happy Bill, I don't really know. I don't recall how we knew that.

Well, so much for Happy Bill Howard and the Dick Graves Nugget [laughing].

You're a master in the art of promotion; tell me more about some of these promotions at this time.

Well, I mentioned that, of course, we started the Blackout Bingo games in the new Sparks Nugget the same as we had operated in Carson. This is where we did not have a regular Bingo parlor, but they were the type of cards that did not have to use corn or beads or anything to put on the numbers. You just slid a little cover over the number when the number was called, so people could play completely throughout the casino. They could play in the restaurant, they could play standing along a slot machine and be playing the slot machines at the same time as they were playing Bingo. The cards were sold for, I forget the amount, so many for a dollar. And the main prize, of course, was for blacking out in so many numbers. We always started at drawing fifty-two numbers and every ten days the amount of the prize went up and the amount of the—the number was increased one number—we'd go from fifty-two to fifty-three to fifty-four.

Then I come up with an idea to have a, what we eventually called, "Silver Grab." We took a wheelbarrow, painted it gold; this was a regular, large construction wheelbarrow. And it was filled with around twenty-one thousand silver dollars. We had a four-and-a-half-foot tall replica of Last Chance Joe standing alongside it, and attached to it was actually a clock that was used in a darkroom photographic studio, which you could set at so many seconds. We had a Big Six Wheel, a large spindle wheel like is used in carnivals; it's about six feet in diameter, and it's divided into maybe eighty, ninety sections with pins, and then you spin this wheel and it stops in one particular section. These sections were divided into so many—five seconds, six seconds, seven, eight, nine, so many at ten, fifteen, thirty, and sixty seconds. The winner of the game each night, of the Bingo game each night, would get to spin this wheel—and incidentally this particular win was in addition

to the big grand prize for the Blackout; this would be maybe the person that got first five numbers in a row or something like that. He would be—he would spin the wheel and let us say that it landed on eight seconds. He would be able to stand up on a platform at the wheelbarrow—and this incidentally was set inside the pit, the inside— inside the tables where the Crap and “21” tables were, and it was raised up so it was in full view of everybody; they could see the action around this wheelbarrow. The customer, if it were a man, would stand up, he’d get all ready, and he got to keep all the silver dollars that he could shove in his pockets in eight seconds. I see here, for instance, from an ad that I ran January 31, 1957, showing the daily wins on Blackout Bingo and in eight seconds on December twenty-fourth, they won a hundred and fifty-seven dollars. In eight seconds on December twenty-sixth was a hundred and thirteen dollars. Another one was a hundred and ninetythree dollars. So it varied because some people could get more dollars than others.

With the use of Silver Grab Bingo, the place absolutely jammed every night at the time that we played it. At this time, Bill Harrah thought that he was the only person in town that should run Bingo; he had a regular Bingo parlor. So, I remember one time the numbers we were drawing were fifty-six numbers, well, the big prize is very likely to go at fifty-six numbers. In fact, it’s—it most definitely will go, sometimes it goes at fifty-three, fifty-four, but if it gets up to fifty-six, it’s almost a cinch to go.

Well, we were playing this game one time a night, while in Harrah’s they were running the Blackout Bingo maybe eight, ten, times. So he—he moved his—the number of balls up from, say, fifty-two to fifty-six because that’s what we were drawing. And he immediately

started losing his big prize, three, four, five times a night. And it didn’t take him long to change his tune on this. Also, during this time Ernie Primm, in fact, many of the casino owners from around town would come down or they’d send scouts down to check us out. Speaking of scouts, there was a fellow by the name of Fred Umber who worked for the Nevada Club, for Fitzgerald. He came down every night to check the game out, but the funny thing is, he liked to play Bingo too.

So, Fred would come in every night to get the count on the number of cards we sold; and since I knew he liked to play Bingo, I went to him one day and I said, “Look Fred, this is silly, you’re wastin’ all your time countin’ these cards. I’ll make a deal with you,” I said, “I’ll give you the absolute, accurate, honest count of the number of cards; you just go ahead and sit down and play Bingo.” So, he would do this. He would buy as many cards as he could play; he’d play Bingo each night and after the Bingo game either myself or the manager would give him the honest, actual count of the number of cards. It made no difference to me because anybody could come in and count them, but in the meantime, I was getting ten, twelve dollars from him on the Bingo cards; and he was satisfying Fitzgerald by bringing him back the number of people playing Bingo that night at the Nugget.

Another thing I noticed was that Ernie Primm showed up every night watchin’ the Bingo, watchin’ the Bingo, watchin’ the Bingo, the only time he’d ever be in the place; and then he’d have somebody else come down and check. And they were counting and seeing the number of customers we had and everything. And so lo and behold, Ernie started Bingo, and he had a big sign out in front of the place and streamers all inside about his Bingo. And the sad part of it was that he wanted to be drawing the same number that we

were drawing and it just happened that our numbers were up to fifty-six at that particular time. Remember we started drawing fiftytwo numbers and every ten days went up one number. So, he started his game at fifty-six and lost his big prize, which I think was—he had doubled our prize of—I think it was five thousand. He doubled the twenty-five hundred, so he gave away five thousand; he lost it the first night. He got furious, ordered everything taken down, cancelled the Bingo game, and swore that I had some kind of a fix on the Bingo game, which of course was absolutely ridiculous. There was no way you could fix the Bingo game. But he never did run Bingo again in the Primadonna; he ran it one night, and that was all.

We went on with this Silver Grab Bingo for a long time, in fact, even went on till we went across the street, and at that time, instead of using a wheelbarrow, I used a bathtub. We would take pictures of every person that was making the grab. As I've said before, the men could put the money in their pockets, and the women could use purses. Well, all of a sudden every woman coming into the place had huge, great big purses, almost as big as small suitcases, which was all right, but the women only got to use one hand, the men could use two hands. The woman could set her purse on a little table alongside the wheelbarrow and with one hand keep all she could put into her purse. When they stepped up to the table, this timer would be set at—if it were fifteen seconds, it would be set at fifteen seconds, a large, loud bell would ring. This would ring until the fifteen seconds had elapsed. People stood around, cheered for them, hollerin', "Do this, do that!" It created a real good feeling within the place that you were not worried about how much money somebody was going to win—you were happy to see them win, and we encouraged people

to get all they could get. We'd tell them how to do it; we'd—if some poor woman'd get up there and get embarrassed or make a bad start, we'd let her put the silver dollars back in and restart so that she could get all she could get.

We also noticed that many of the men were wearing overcoats and raincoats. About the time the Bingo was ready to start, they'd go get their overcoats from the coat rack and put it on. There was one fella that spent a lot of time around the place, and he was always jokin' that he was gonna really get me. So, he had a raincoat, so finally one night he won the Bingo; he gets up there all ready, the timer goes off, he makes a grab and he—two handfuls of money and shoves 'em in the raincoat pockets, but he forgets about the slits in the raincoat that are so that you can reach into your suitcoat pocket. He goes through the slits and the money all drops out on the floor underneath him. Needless to say, he was very disturbed.

We would take—as I said, we took pictures of all the winners, and then I ran many ads of just the photograph with a caption underneath it of whoever the person was, and how much they won. These were run and many times the paper would run above them, the word advertisement or a-d-v. But a lot of times they'd forget to do this, so the ad had really the value of almost a news item. And it was much more effective than being just an ad. It was run just like a news item would be. I ran hundreds of these in the paper; it'd be maybe about a three-column, eight-, ten-inch ad.

The amounts won, incidentally, ranged from, for instance, for five seconds, they'd run from seventy-three dollars to a hundred and ninety-four; for ten seconds, from a hundred and forty-eight dollars to two hundred and forty-three; for sixty seconds they run from six hundred and eighty-five dollars to a thousand and five dollars. For instance, here's

a sixty-second one, nine hundred and twenty-nine dollars; another sixty-second one, six hundred and seventysix dollars.

This Blackout Bingo—or this Silver Grab Bingo was promptly copied by quite a few other casinos, several in Las Vegas and in several other parts of the state, which made no difference to me because it was still going great for me all the time.

The bathtub contained how many silver dollars?

I don't exactly remember what that contained. I probably could go back and find out from someone what that did contain, but it must have been about sixty or seventy thousand— at least that.

No false bottoms?

No, no they were completely full. And, of course, this was quite a promotion anyway because customers were seeing this all the time, and we had a sign over it what the— Silver Grab Bingo every night at nine o'clock or whatever time it was, and naturally it brought back a lot of players that might have come in for lunch or come in in the middle of the afternoon, and then they'd come back in to get a chance at this Silver Grab Bingo. It was good, too, because it was—the customers could crowd around and in a way participate; they were all for the person that was doing the silver grabbing—they were rooting for him to get all he could get. So they were getting a lot of enjoyment out of every winner, just—not as much, naturally, as the winner, but they were exhilarated and happy to see somebody winning and grabbing this money.

Did you keep an accounting of the grand total when this was over with?

No. I've got an ad here that lists the winners at the Silver Grab Bingo, and it runs from December tenth to January twenty-eighth. That'd be approximately forty-eight days, and including one grand prize of twenty-five hundred— this would've been a grand prize at Blackout Bingo—there was a total amount paid out of twenty-one thousand four hundred and fifty-eight dollars. This was in, what'd I say, forty-eight days. I don't know how much the total was in all the time we operated.

It's too bad you didn't keep some of those silver dollars just for yourself.

Yes, it certainly [laughing] is; it was a very foolish stunt that I didn't because they were all brand-new; I'd had them shipped in, so they were brand-new, uncirculated silver dollars that we had in the wheelbarrow, and of course, at that time there were plenty of silver dollars. They'd be worth now—just for plain old silver dollars they retail at five to six dollars now, I guess.

Shipped in from which federal reserve bank?

From San Francisco.

You must have been their biggest customer.

Well, certainly Nevada was their biggest customer. We had some local bank get them for us, so that they were new.

We played Bingo, the Silver Grab Bingo, three times a day, at three p.m., nine p.m. and midnight. So, of course anybody coming in at—playing at nine o'clock, it wouldn't probably be over till nine-thirty; they couldn't very well afford to go home, so they'd hang around to play the midnight game.

During this time I had many other promotions. I constantly brought out the fact that there were no parking meters in Sparks. I see here's an ad where Lassen—this is dated Susanville, California, and it tells about the town of Lassen voting parking meters out. So, I had a reprint of the ad in the—of the news item in my ad, said. We agree. Parking meters stink! Dick Graves' Nugget just three miles east of Reno." This was November 27, 1957.

Then there was another newspaper article carried in the paper where—stating that the Gaming Department was complaining that a lot of Bingo operators were starting their Bingo games with ridiculously high prizes for covering the card in fifty numbers on a Bingo card. Well, this is almost impossible to do. The odds against it are astronomical, and of course we always started our Blackout Bingo at fifty-two numbers. So, I—in this particular ad I cut out the newspaper article, reprinted part of it, and then said, "Bingo players do," (in great big letters) "get better odds at the Sparks Nugget." And brought out the fact that we started our Silver Grab Bingo at fifty-two numbers. It would be completely ridiculous to start 'em at fifty numbers.

Another promotion that we had; this was also in '57—I see two ads, one on April tenth, where it said, "Seventyfive hundred daffodils for sale at ten cents a dozen. All money collected from the sale from these daffodils will be donated to the Sparks junior baseball league." Then in another ad on April fourteenth, said: "The law of supply and demand. Last week our daffodil supply was exhausted in one hour and fifteen minutes. The demand was so great, and the price so low, now the price has gone up, so the kids make more dough. Fifteen thousand daffodils at twenty cents a dozen." And of course limit

two dozen per customer, and the money still went to the junior baseball league.

I suppose in today's method of operating casinos, selling daffodils at ten and twenty cents a dozen, seems like somewhat of a silly form of advertising, but at that particular time it seemed to work very well for me and was extremely effective. It not only brought people in to buy the daffodils, the donation to the junior baseball league was a good thing, made people feel good about the Nugget and about the operation.

I see where on April fourth, we ran an ad giving away a tiny gasoline-driven jeep. This had a little washing machine motor in it. I think it was made by King Motors. And funny thing, it has John Ascuaga sitting in the little jeep. We had given away quite a few of these in Idaho and continued to do it in Nevada.

A rather interesting thing in reading one of these old ads is where I had started a dollar machine promotion. I said: "You've heard about a millionaires' row, Wall Streets Douglas Alley; now at the Nugget in Sparks it's Dollar Machine Row." In most casinos, there were only a very few dollar machines, and generally the dollar machines were set tighter than the regular machines. I came up with the idea of setting the machines, the dollar machines, exactly as loose as our nickel machines and putting in a quantity of them and a variety of different reel strips. This was done and while we did fairly good at it, it didn't take off quite as well as I'd hoped that it would. Oddly enough right now, dollar machines—this basic same idea has been started all over the state of Nevada with dollar machines, setting them at a high payout percentage and putting in a great quantity of them, and the casinos are now making more money off the dollar machines than they are off all the rest the machines put together. This was back in

1957 that I had this idea, and at this point it's proving out to be a very good one all over Nevada.

Another item we ran constantly within the place was a printed item I called "Nugget Newsy Notes," and we just kept printing these up. It told about new slot machines or about when we were selling Keno tickets, the girls were— would sell—we had Keno runners to sell Keno tickets, about a new Volkswagen sports car that we were going to give away, about the Silver Grab Bingo, various things; we'd just keep printing these with all kinds of new news items that would come along.

We also at that time printed a daily news item. We'd pick up the late news at eleven o'clock in the morning and run it off on a mimeograph and print it every day. They're still doing this at the Nugget in Sparks today.

I'm looking at this ad that you ran with the cut-out story on, "Bingo players due to get better odds. New rules are being considered by state Gaming Board." Tell me about your dealings with Mr. Robbins Cahill, the chairman of that board?

Well, I never had very extensive dealings with Mr. Cahill. I knew him very well. I went before him a couple times, I guess, to get new licenses. I never had any problems of any kind, and really not any close association with Robbins Cahill. He did an excellent job while he was with the Gaming department.

March 27, 1956, I ran an interesting ad. This was a full page ad written with a marks-a-lot pen, a heavy, wide pen in my own handwriting, and it said, "Dear Friends: Johnny Ascuaga, my Sparks Nugget manager, had the nerve to leave on a vacation. Now I can have things my own way for a change."

Signed, "Dick Graves." "Wednesday, March 28 is Double Day. Double jackpots, twenty-five minute periods all day. Double drinks, you pay for one, you get one free. Double salaries will be paid to every employee. This will teach Johnny to leave town!" "Free mystery drawings all day for cash and merchandise." All in all, I ran three of these full-page ads.

Another one on February 7, 1957, and this was reversed so that the—my writing was in white and all the rest of the page was black. It was of the same theme; we had special drawings while John was away, we had double jackpots, we had two-for-one drinks, special Keno games; we called it "Give it away, while John's away. This hellzapoppin' celebration starts at ten a.m. and won't let up for even one minute until midnight." Signed, "D. G."

Then on March 6, 1957, we made a little twist on the idea and said, "Friends, he's gone! Dick has gone south with the birds. So with the boss away, it's my turn to play. John Ascuaga." On Thursday, March seventh, at the Sparks Nugget, "Generous John while Dick is Gone Day." Again, it was six—free dolls, free Mexican Chihuahua puppies, guaranteed Silver Grab at the three p.m. Bingo, double Keno games. This was another kind of offbeat type of advertising that for some reason seemed to work for me; the biggest thing was that it was creating a personal feeling with the customer. It was me telling them that *I* was going to do certain things. It was John telling them that while I was away he was gonna have a big special party, even the ad is signed Generous John. These things seemed to work extremely well for me, whether they would today or not, I don't know.

At this sane time, what were the other casinos doing in the way of advertising?

Mainly just pretty much plain, straight-line advertising, advertising their entertainment. Of course, at this point I had no entertainment—or maybe advertising their Bingo or Reno, but in a more staid, regular manner, rather than like an offbeat, full-page ad written in your own handwriting. This is what, I think, set the Nugget apart from the other casinos and why we drew such an enormous amount of business from Reno during all those years.

Would you say that you were the only one doing this extensive full-page advertising in the local paper?

Oh no, I don't think that, at the time. No, Harrah's and Harolds and everybody did lots of—lots of advertising, but not where they were giving away jeeps and daffodils and Chihuahua puppies and full-page ads written in their own handwriting and that type of thing. It was more the regular form of advertising that they did.

One other thing in—during 1957 that we started was our own credit card. We ran ads in the paper, with credit applications, and this credit card entitled people to charge their food and beverages to their credit card, and they were billed once a month for it. John still is using the Nugget credit card. Also that winter we advertised in the Sacramento and San Francisco area that we would furnish free buses from the Donner ski areas to Sparks and back. This program worked quite well and brought in a lot of people into the Nugget.

I've mentioned before that we started dealing on property on the south side of B Street and in the block right directly across from the Nugget. And, my original idea was to create some parking over there. Then, along in the early part of '57, I realized that I was

going to need more space, so I called Frank Green down one day (remember he's the architect that had done all the work for me) and we stood on the north side of B Street, the Nugget side, looking across at this full block, four hundred feet long that had, at that time, had eight houses on it. In fact, I believe at the time that Frank and I were standing there, some of the houses had been moved off and it was starting to open up. So, actually standing there on the street, we more or less made the decision to start doing some sketch work and planning on a new casino in that area, in that four hundred by a hundred-and-forty-foot space. I went to work and gave Frank a list of things that I felt should go into the new casino—how large the coffee shop ought to be, that we would duplicate this Round House (the steak house that had been so successful), how big the casino area should be, all various things that I felt should go into the place. So, he started doing sketching.

He came up with a space for the casino which was actually about half of the block, so this would have been approximately two hundred feet—maybe a little over that—by a hundred and forty feet. We worked very rapidly on these plans, and the houses were—I advertised the houses for sale, and I didn't seem to get to be selling them, so I ended up buying some property out at Sun Valley. And a fellow by the name of Ross Page and I sort of went together in a little partnership deal, and we moved the houses all out to some property in Sun Valley which was northeast of Sparks. He was sort of a do-it-yourself builder, and eventually I bought his end of it out and over the years rented some of the houses and eventually sold them all.

The new casino went into construction in the fall of '57. In fact, there's a notice, a little item in the paper, that—it's September

16, 1957, and in this article it tells that the—about a hundred new employees will be added to the current staff. It was to have thirty-six thousand square feet, Round House steak house; Golden Rooster Room, chicken house; a hundred and sixty-seat, twenty-four-hour coffee shop, banquet rooms, two cocktail bars. It was a tremendous step for me to take. Here I'd—was operating in a space seventy-five feet by a hundred and forty; I'm going now to two hundred feet by a hundred and forty. The casino on the north side of the street had been very successful, and I was extremely afraid of making the new casino too fancy or too lavish, yet it had to be new and it had to be modern. So this was one of the things that I worked with Frank Green on, and Frank Green was particularly good at this type of thing of making a room feel comfortable to people of all walks of life.

We decided to put in a terrazzo floor at that time. This is actually before there was too much carpet being used in casinos, so the whole casino area was terrazzo. This was very easy to keep clean and very economical because it surely didn't wear out. We had come up with the idea to have a thirty-five-foot-high replica of Last Chance Joe made out of fiberglass to go on the front of the building. He is still standing there today.

Also designed into the casino, and this is one of the first casinos where this was actually designed into the construction at the time that the casino was constructed, was the catwalks. These were walkways in the ceiling that dropped down from the main ceiling, which had one-way mirrors in them which you could see through from the back side; from the casino side they were a mirror, from the other side they were just clear glass. And you could have somebody up there watching the operation. I think I've discussed that in the—earlier in this story. But we designed

this right into the ceiling and throughout the whole place.

The Golden Rooster Room was conceived because chicken was a popular item, and I had run across a place in southern California that had a unique way of serving fried chicken. It was served in a casserole, and the customer helped themselves at the table. In other words, if there were four people there was enough chicken put in the casserole to serve four people. Also, in this room we set up a system of hiring University of Nevada students exclusively. This was an excellent program. And we had on each table a little card which told what the waiter's name was, where he was from, and briefly what he was majoring in. This gave the customer a good feeling that this young chap was workin' his way through school and opened up conversation and was very well accepted, and the University was very happy with it because we gave work to a lot of boys. We worked their work schedules actually around their time. Some could work at noon, some could work only maybe two or three hours at night, but it worked around the student's time as much as and as closely as we could do it.

That practice is still being maintained because when you go into the Golden Rooster Room now, you find that card on each table, and I've noticed that a good many of the students today are from foreign countries.

Yes, John's carried this through because it's a very good program. It's a good source of employees and it's a good public relations program—and the customers like it, the customers like talking to the young man. The fact that their name and card is on the table unquestionably increases their tips, and it allows them to earn enough money to help with their schooling.

And it ties the casino to the community or to the University.

Yes, that's very true. Of course, John still carries on the scholarship program with the University, which I started.

I remember one day shortly before we opened the new casino; it was pretty well along, pretty well cleaned up of construction equipment and everything, and I went over and was standing in it one evening, and I said, "Brother, how am I ever gonna fill this place." Because it sure looked big. It looked gigantic, and it *was* big compared to the old casino. We went along and got everything ready, and remember this; we started in the fall of '57 and on March 17, 1958, had our grand opening of the new casino. We had made arrangements with the Gaming department to transfer the license from one side of the street to the other, so we'd had no problem there. We decided to make the move in the evening, from one side of the street to the other. So, we actually picked up tables and customers helped us carry the "21" tables and the Crap tables across the street, and the traffic was stopped; and one of the Crap tables was set down in the middle of the street and they shot a few rolls of the dice and played a little "21" right in the middle of B Street, and then carried them on over across the street. The people came right from the old Nugget over to the new Nugget. The new Nugget took right off with a bang; it was an absolute, immediate success. It was almost too small from the day I moved into it. It did extremely good business.

Was it by design or accident that March seventeenth was chosen? That was three years to the day that you first opened.

Well, it kind of worked out up to that date, and we just decided to make it work

that date—make it March seventeenth; maybe it was a little bit lucky or something, I don't know.

Saint Patrick has smiled on the Nugget.

That's right.

Here's another editorial I used to great effectiveness. I'm proud of this one:

Territorial Enterprise, Friday, May 16, 1958 by Bob Richards. One of the week's major events in the north western Nevada saloon-casino-restaurant world to which this column devotes most of its attention was the press preview party thrown in Sparks last Sunday evening by squire Dick Graves; the place thus previewed being, of course, his new Nugget.

I got out there at the appointed time, inspected with approval the three story, three dimensional figure of Dick's trade character, Last Chance Joe, which occupies a place of prominence outside the building, then entered the main casino room whose interior dimensions are approximately those of New York's Pennsylvania station. There I was welcomed by Nugget PR man Fred Davis who pinned a badge of identification to my buckskins and pointed out the main bar to which I accordingly directed myself. Draped over that long and elegant piece of furniture was none other than the long and elegant Cactus Tom of station KOH, already dubbed by this department the most sophisticated cowpoke disc jockey west of Eastport, Maine, who after one or two seconds of persuasive argument convinced me I should

order a drink to be paid for by the house. Thus fortified and tranquilized I devoted more careful attention to my surroundings which had been designed by architect Frank Green and crew. It was the sort of thing that always leaves a hambone writer like myself groping for fitting adjectives without coming up with anything adequate. Perhaps Dick's own word "fantabulous" is the one that's closest to filling the bill, so that's what I'll say: the interior's fantabulous. Terrazzo flooring, ceiling a rich ruby red reflected by rank after rank of rich ruby red slot machines, then just for contrast the soothing green of the "21," roulette and crap tables and if I weren't such a poor loser I'd say right now that Mr. Richard Graves' new joint would be the place I'd most like to drop money in.

The main bar's back bar is a chaste creation of polished mahogany ornamented in its geographical center with a display of old theatrical posters. Then across the room, or field, is another refreshment stand called the Basque Bar decorated with such exotic items from Basque Land as felt murals, an organillo, a zahakia, a txistu and tambour, a cesta, and jota costumes, and you'd better go there yourself to learn what those things are and also pick up a pamphlet composed by local boy Bob Laxalt, author of the current best seller, *Sweet Promised Land*, describing the history of his own Basque people whose greatest population concentration in the U.S.A. is in this sane sweet promised land of Nevada.

I was taking all this in while trying to fight off Cactus Tom's renewed entreaties to sample another slug of barley water when who should show up but the boss himself wearing an absent-minded look in his eyes. I soon found out that his fertile brain was heavily occupied in dreaming up plans for fittingly transferring the scene of action from the old Nugget across the street to the new Nugget at the stroke of that day's midnight, although the official opening celebration won't begin until next Sunday the 18th and will last through the 24th and probably will be the most fantabulous (again) thing of its kind to take place in these parts since the great V & T Railroad Ball in Carson City in the early 1870s.

He confided that he was toying with the idea of leading the people across the street with a pair of bagpipers, or, perhaps, a piedpiper type, although he frankly admitted that the latter expedient might present undesirable implications to the more literate customers.

By this time most of Reno's press, radio and television people had arrived and were greeting one another cordially or warily according to their previous dealings and it was especially gratifying to note that staff members of both the *Nevada State Journal* and *Reno Evening Gazette*, which is to say Reno Newspapers, Inc., didn't put on any airs at all when chatting with us country cousins and were just as democratic as you'd wish. Coincidental with this mass arrival the free drink consumption at the

bar stepped up about four hundred percent and since it was getting so crowded there I joined a group being shepherded by Fred Davis on a conducted tour of the building.

First stop was the Virginian Room, a richly decorated hall designed for banquets whose decor is a salute to our own Virginia City. Huge gold frames surround rare lithographs and photographs of early days on the Comstock, many of them scrounged in far off places by Grahame Hardy, Carson City publisher and historian.

From there Fred led us right into the innards of the structure, including places the average customer never gets to look at. We saw the great kitchens serving the Nugget's three restaurants, the Round House Dining Room (full of railroad memorabilia), the Coffee Shop, and the Golden Rooster Room. Then we inspected the Children's Theatre where small fry can be parked while mom and pop have a whirl at the games, the employees' recreation rooms and an employees' refreshment room which for this occasion was set up with a bar for those who had become thirsty during the past ten minutes. Then there was a temperature control room with an instrument panel like a DC-7's, an air conditioning installation which reminded me of the Queen Mary's engine room, and a crow's nest erected out over the main floor where the jackpot announcers can obtain a clear view of what's going on and also correctly dispatch incoming phone calls. We also looked in at the

overhead security inspection ramps (you know, those one-way mirror concourses) and that led to a private thought that such an inspection job could occasionally be rewarding during the low neckline season. We also saw Dick's office and his chief mate Johnny Ascuaga's office but when I asked to be shown where Dick intends to keep his money Fred looked a little pained and I knew I'd made a gaffe.

The tour completed, all hands then entered the Golden Rooster Room for a fantabulous (again and again) chicken dinner, said fowl prepared from the secret recipe of one Col. Harlan Sanders of Cordin, Kentucky, who has sold Dick a Nevada exclusive on the process. A salad, wine, hot rolls, dessert, coffee, and to be sure, the piece de resistance itself upon whose consumption I found myself wishing I'd got to the Colonel first.

It was time to go home then, so after thanking my hosts and mentally noting the location of the keno desk for future use I went out into the night, found the car in the fatabulously sized free parking lot, and headed for Sun Mountain. It all had had a California supermarket opening beaten hollow.

Wasn't it about this time you instigated a profitsharing plan at the Nugget?

Yes. This was put into effect December 10, 1957. I'll read this. I have in my hand a folder that describes the profit-sharing plan and in the front of it is a short letter from me to the Nugget employees:

I am very happy to make available to all employees of the Sparks Nugget, a unique profit-sharing plan. On the following pages through a series of questions and answers, the profit-sharing plan committee explains the important features of the plan. I have worked out this method of sharing my profits with you, because I realize the great importance of loyal and permanent employees. Also, I know that in the past, it has always been felt that the gaming house employee was a day-today worker. I don't want this; I want you to become and remain an important part of the Sparks Nugget. Very few companies in Nevada have such a profit-sharing plan and as far as I know, the Sparks Nugget is the first casino that ever offered an opportunity to all its employees. You can readily see that this, in effect, is a ten percent raise for every employee who joins the plan.

Under this profit-sharing plan, the employees put in two percent of their salary and the Nugget added ten percent of their salary to the plan. It was the first casino and is still one of very few casinos to have the plan. John [Ascuaga] has continued the plan—has continued to carry on with the plan, however, he had to reduce the amount of his contribution, particularly after I sold to him because it wasn't possible for him to pay off what he owed me for the stock of the Nugget and continue to contribute so heavily to the plan. The employee becomes partially vested as the years of membership go on. For instance, on the seventh and eighth year he's fifty-five-percent vested interest and on ten years he has a hundred-percent vested interest. That means that if he quits

at that point he gets one hundred percent of what is in the plan. The money is held by an investment company, and the money is invested in various forms of investments, stocks and bonds, et cetera. It's been an extremely successful program and that's the reason that today the Nugget has so many employees who have worked there for ten, fifteen, twenty years. This, actually, is the only way that many of these employees can end up saving any money. You, more or less, force them into a savings plan which gives them something in case they get sick or when they retire.

When you say it's about the only way for them to save any money, what exactly do you mean by that?

Well, the tendency of so many people, they just live hand-to-mouth. They just don't save money. They get some money and it just burns a hole in their pocket. They can't put it in the bank and save it; not everybody, I don't mean that, but a great percentage of employees in any line of work, this is true. They just simply won't save money themselves. This is more or less, or is a method of forcing them to save some money.

Have any of the other casinos in Nevada, especially those in northern Nevada copied the Nugget plan?

I think some of them have. I don't know if they copied the exact plan, but I think that some of them have profitsharing plans. I don't particularly know of any right now.

What gave you the idea to institute this?

Well, I had read of it being done in other businesses and I could see no reason it

shouldn't be done in the casino business, and I felt that it would have a tremendous effect in being able to hold employees and not having so much turnover. And it *did* have that effect. It kept employees with us; it let them become a part of the place; it made them—after all, they were getting a ten percent interest in the profits.

Would you say that that's the number one problem in the casino business—the turnover of employees?

I'd say that's the number one problem in any business, because in any business, employees are everything to the operation of the business, and if you've constantly got new employees that don't know what they're doing, why, you've got problems. It's been extremely successful at the Nugget.

Did you notice right away that the turnover lessened at the Nugget after this was instituted, or did it take awhile before things stabilized?

Well, no, I'd say it had almost an immediate effect. After all, like I say in that letter, is that they're getting a ten percent raise in salary right now, and then this money is being put *away* for them, and they're building up a reserve for themselves. They naturally don't wanta walk off and leave that. It's just human nature; they don't wanta do it. Not everybody is going to follow that thinking, but surely the majority of 'em have.

At the time that you turned over the Nugget to John Ascuaga in the early 1960s, how many employees were on the Nugget payroll?

I don't have that figure on hand, but it must've been eleven, twelve hundred.

And approximately, what is it today?

I'd say it's over two thousand. Maybe more than that, I don't really know.

So; today that profit-sharing plan is a very big one.

Oh, yes, it certainly is; it's very big. Interesting enough, my son took us to the Liberace show the other night, and we saw Cor Van Der Stokker. He was the chap that was the waiter on a Dutch steamship and came to work at the Nugget; has been and is now, the maitre d' at the Celebrity Room, the showroom at the Nugget. And as I walked in he said, "Well—!" He was very glad to see me and he showed me his diamond pin he'd just gotten. On November first he'd been with the Nugget twenty years and he was really proud. He was happy, and he said, "I so well remember the day you picked me up at the airport twenty years ago.

Here are some of the amounts that have been paid various employees when they have retired or left the Nugget for some other reason: Ole Severson—his estate received \$57,382.00 in 1976; Gordon Elliott just retired in November this year and received over \$55,000.00; Pete Cecarelli, 1976, \$26,248.00; Gene Cole, a cashier, 1974, \$16,778.00. So you can see that this has been a wonderful program. There is presently between three and four million dollars in the fund.

Sometime prior to the opening of the new Nugget, which as I said, was March seventeenth of '58, I conceived the idea to have a golden rooster, a solid gold rooster, to promote the Golden Rooster Room, and the Nugget of course in general. I don't exactly know how I came up with this idea, but some way did, and decided to go through with it. I first went to Newman's Silver Shop in Reno and talked to them about it, and they

said that they could certainly do it, and we decided on the size and got some various art pictures of roosters and all and decided on the general design. And a man by the name of Frank Polk carved in wood the mold for the golden rooster. Newman's then made application to the U.S. Mint for the necessary gold for the rooster. And for some reason, to this day I don't know just why, they—the mint refused to give Newman's the necessary gold to make the rooster. So then I went to Shreve's and Company, jewelers in San Francisco (this is a very old and very prominent firm in San Francisco) and talked to them about it and they made a telephone call and later wrote a letter to the mint, and the mint gave them permission to buy the gold to make the rooster. So they took Frank Polk's design and elaborated on it. I dealt with a Mr. James Murphy at Shreve's, and he said that it was very understandable that Newman's being a small shop and buying gold in small quantities and only occasionally, whereas Shreve's being a much larger jewelry firm and a very old firm, a hundred and eight years old, bought gold from the mint in San Francisco all the time. So, they made application, and they got the gold without any problem.

They did an extremely beautiful job on the rooster; it was—at that time they had available to them a very old gentleman who was an expert in the art of strading. This is different from engraving. Strading is where the metal is removed away to leave the design. In engraving the design is cut into the metal; strading is where you would strade; you would take away part of the gold, in other words, to leave a feather, a design of a feather. And this was extremely well-done and is considered a very, very fine piece of work. This man has since died, but he and Shreve's were very proud of the piece of work that they'd created.

I went over to San Francisco with security and a lot of fanfare and brought the golden rooster home on the airplane, was met with an armored car at the airport, and we transported the rooster to the Nugget, and it was put in a special glass case that I'd had built for it, which was set up so that we had a burglar alarm on it. Well, we had lots of publicity about the golden rooster, and there was a great deal of interest in it. It was solid gold, it was fifteen pounds, and was really a beautiful piece of work. This was set up in the casino area right close to the entrance to the Golden Rooster Room.

One morning in December of 1958 (this is eight months later now), we received a call from two Washington U.S. Treasury officials demanding a meeting that afternoon at two pan. in the U.S. Attorney's office. We were told that it pertained to the golden rooster and were advised to have our attorneys present. At this meeting we were told that we were in violation of the Gold Reserve Act and that the United States government was going to confiscate the rooster. We told these officials—of course, I had my attorney there who was Paul Laxalt at the time, and we told these officials that Shreve and Company had made the rooster and we were sure that they had received permission to do so, and we were given the gold to do so by the Director of the Mint in San Francisco. We offered to call Shreve's and ask them about this; this was done on the phone. Shreve's got their application from the file and read it to them over the phone. The two U.S. Treasury officials folded up their files and had nothing more to say. We considered this, naturally, a closed matter.

Eighteen months later in July of 1960, the U.S. Treasury officials again came out and filed a complaint (quotes) "U.S. of America vs. one solid gold object in the form of a rooster." A warrant was issued for the rooster's arrest, and a U.S. Marshal confiscated the rooster. A little

later on, we made a request to put up bail for the rooster until the case could be tried, and one of the headlines I see here says, "Golden Rooster Lays Egg in Court. Judge Refuses Bail." After all, we were not hiding or hoarding the gold, and the rooster had been on display for over two years. But anyway, that motion was refused.

At that time, U.S. Federal Judge Sherrill Halbert—and he had to be brought in from San Francisco because the federal judge here was Judge Ross who was Paul Laxalt's father-in-law—Judge Halbert said, "I am of the view that the government ought to abandon this case. It shouldn't be put in the position of Mr. Castro in Cuba, of taking private property arbitrarily. In turn," Judge Halbert said, "the Nugget should get rid of the disputed rooster. Nevada is known as a silver state," he said, "why can't the rooster be made of solid silver?" Well, this was a little ridiculous. It was a *gold* rooster; it was the Golden Rooster Room and it was a gold rooster, and I didn't—wasn't interested in any silver rooster. So we decided to go ahead and arrange to go to trial to try and get our rooster back. The trial was set to be heard in federal court in Carson City in March, but was later advanced to May because of very heavy calendars. On about May first, Judge Halbert's court reporter was subpoenaed on a criminal case in Sacramento, and the trial of the golden rooster was delayed again and was finally heard in September of 1961.

So, the government now had the golden rooster locked up in the First National Bank and the papers were full of this—the government confiscating the golden rooster, and everybody was writing in and had suggestions and ideas and I received mail from all over the world on it. Somebody came in and told me that there was a large gold rooster up at Virginia City made out of brass.

And, it looked just like the solid gold rooster only it was much larger. Well, I got an idea to go up and get that. I went up and bought it, and it was a beautiful piece of work. It stood about—the golden rooster was actually about nine inches high, and this large rooster that I bought in Virginia City looked almost like a duplicate of it, and it was brass that had been coated with gold leaf and sort of antiqued. It stood about two feet high.

So, our niece, Beebe Savini, made a convict outfit for the golden rooster, a little convict suit, and a convict cap and a number on the front of the chest of the bird, and we put the suit on this brass rooster and placed it on the stand where the golden rooster regularly was with a sign telling the story about where the solid gold rooster was and the present situation concerning it. Like I say, newspapers picked this up all over the country, everywhere.

There was another article by Frank Johnson. Incidentally, Frank now holds a high executive position with the Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas. There was a great play on words in the newspapers. Another one I see here is "Roost or Roast? Jurors Must Decide." So many of this type. We had—there were editorials. The *Reno Evening Gazette* on July thirtieth ran an editorial, "Why All the Commotion?" criticizing the government for going to such extent to—claiming that an individual American shouldn't own over fifty ounces of gold. And it was really rather ridiculous to go to such an extent on this thing. However, we made the most out of it, and of course got lots and lots of publicity.

It went to trial in March of '62—a jury trial, and the government came out with a whole slew of attorneys and government gold experts and everything. This is the article:

March 29, 1962. The Golden Rooster, Roost or Roast?

Jurors Must Decide. Was it customary artistic use when Dick Graves had an eighteen carat solid gold rooster nine inches tall and tipping the scales at fifteen pounds, made and placed on display in his Sparks Nugget? That is the question a federal court jury of ten men and two women will be asked to answer sometime today when opposing attorneys conclude their arguments and United States Judge Sherrill Halbert instructs them and leaves the case in their hands. Defense attorneys Paul and Peter Laxalt contend that Graves acted in good faith when he had the rooster manufactured and put it to customary artistic use. They concede that it was also beneficial for advertising and promotion. The government through Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Wilson agrees the rooster is an art object, but contend its primary use was that of an advertising and promotional gimmick to ballyhoo a restaurant. If the government is right, then the overweight golden bird violates the 1934 Gold Reserve Act and Graves loses possession. The rooster will be consigned to a furnace and be melted down.

It doesn't say right here, but this regulation also called that I would be fined twice the value of the gold, in addition to them confiscating it.

If the defense is right, the rooster can return to his plush burglar proof, bulletproof coop at the Sparks Nugget where it was on display from May, 1958 until July, 1960. The government seized the bird in 1960 and plunged

it into *durance vile* in a bank vault. There it remained until the trial when it was brought into the courtroom to become an exhibit. Three expert witnesses, one for the defense and two for the government, disagreed yesterday on whether the bird was put to customary artistic use. Shirley Kravitts, art expert from Highland Park, Illinois, appeared for the defense and testified the use of the rooster as an art object had been entirely normal, quite customary. Vance Kirkland, art museum curator and director of the school of art at Denver university, testified for the government, said the use was unc customary because the emphasis was placed on the bird's value rather than as a work of art. However, he admitted that if he had owned the rooster and a restaurant, he would have displayed the bird possibly much as Graves did.

This admission was brought about by some questioning from Paul Laxalt.

Spero Anargyros, a San Francisco sculptor, said it was unusual to cast such an art object from solid metal. He said he did not think it was put to customary artistic use because advertising of it emphasized the solid gold characteristic rather than the artistic value. Graves, who took the stand first in defense of the bird, said the rooster was just one of the artistic objects he displayed at his places of business. He said he had the rooster made to give the people something to come in and see, admitting that it had definite promotional and advertising benefits. When the assistant director

of the Mint refused to give Newman's Silver Shop in Reno permission to make it because the firm's license would not allow them to buy that much gold, he turned to Shreve's in San Francisco. Arthur Carmichael, former superintendent of the Mint in San Francisco, testified he felt making the bird was legitimate transaction when he was contacted about it. Leland Howard, the Mint official who turned down the original request, testified he advised Graves and his attorney that this much gold in solid form for this purpose was not customary artistic use under the regulations. Therefore, it will be up to the jury to sift what everyone has said to determine if the bird and the purpose for what it was used was customary artistic use.

The jury did decide in our favor. The decision was unanimous, and the golden rooster was returned to us and was put back, as they say, "in his bulletproof coop at the Sparks Nugget."

How long was the jury out?

I don't recall that, but it was just a matter of a few hours. Wasn't long at all.

I see a little article in the August 5, 1960, *Territorial Enterprise*, with one of their fancy headlines. "Dick Graves' Shiny Chanticleer is Now in Quod as T-Men Invoke Gold Statute-." This is a headline only the *Territorial Enterprise* could write.

The old saw that those who have, get, could perhaps be paraphrased to those who know the value of publicity sometimes have it dropped right in their lap. This in regard to the case

of Dick Graves' Nugget Casino in Sparks, Nevada, where last week one of the house's ornaments, a nine-inch solid gold rooster weighing fifteen pounds, was seized upon direction of the United States Treasury, which holds that its possession is a violation of the 1934 Gold Reserve Act ban against possession of gold.

Then he goes on to just tell the story. Also, directly after the trial in August of '62, the government—an article in the *Review Journal* says, "Government Still Pecks at Solid Gold Rooster." Another play on words. Dateline Carson City:

The federal government files notice of appeal Tuesday in the case of the solid gold rooster owned by Sparks Nugget gambler Dick Graves. U.S. Attorney Tom Wilson said the notice does not necessarily mean that an appeal will be filed, it merely preserves our right to appeal the case, Wilson said. The government now has sixty days in which to file the necessary papers.

Incidentally, the government never did go ahead and file an appeal. It's my understanding that this golden rooster case set quite a bit of precedent in gold cases that have come up since that time. I received hundreds of letters from people all over the country. Here's a poem that came in: "The Barnyard Blues" by Don Tuttle. I don't know who Don Tuttle is or where he's from, but I'll read a little bit of the poem:

I'm just a mixed-up rooster,
neither young nor very old, But I've
had my share of troubles just because
I'm made of gold.

The thing that has me all shook up
and leaves in doubt my fate, Is just the
silly fact that I'm a little overweight.

It seems a rooster ought to weigh
to keep his self respect, Three pounds,
two ounces, nothing more, and yet—

When I was checked I tipped the
scales at fourteen pounds with one
ounce more to spare.

I'd always been in perfect health
and didn't really care.

But now I've tried crash diets and
exist on Metrical, But haven't lost an
ounce to date and haven't gained a pal.

I've made the headlines many
times with pictures, writeups, all, But
I don't care for all that stuff; I want to
sit and bawl.

This goes on and I'll just skip a few of these
and read the last one:

I guess I'm slightly prejudiced
because the pawn is me; I wish they'd
send me back to Sparks and leave this
rooster be.

But if my uncle Dick and I can't
beat this other group, I swear with
all my golden heart, I'll haunt their
chicken soup.

We received many items in the mail.
This one is a poem my father sent down to
me:

How Dumb Can You Get?

Our Dick had a rooster all made
of fine gold, Artistic and beautiful it
was to behold.

So they came to his place from far,
far away.

What a fine work of art so many
would say.

So business got good, and better,
and best, Till that man in the high hat
and tattersall vest, Says to himself,
"We can't leave that gold there, We can
send it across to the land of the bear."

So go get that rooster the marshal
was told, We can send it to them and
keep the war cold.

Oh my, oh my, what a dumb thing
to do, When they could have helped
me or even helped you.

Signed by A. Anonymous (It was
written by my father.)

So, all in all, there's not much question about
it, the solid gold rooster was a tremendous
promotion. If it wasn't initially, the government
surely made it one; and during all that time, the
two years that the case was being held up and
then finally tried, we got lots of press on it. I
had the large brass rooster sitting there with
his convict suit on. And then finally the rooster
came back and was placed in the same case that
we'd had made for it, and it is still on display
in John Ascuaga's Nugget today right at the
entrance to the present Golden Rooster Room.
People still come in and talk about it. There are
little folders available telling the whole story of
the golden rooster because many people are
still interested in it. It was a lot of fun and a lot
of—sort of a peculiar type of enjoyment, but
going through the whole trial and tribulations
of this thing was a very, very interesting part
of my life.

*Is there any history to the brass rooster you
replaced the golden one with, temporarily?
What life did it have in Virginia City?*

Unfortunately, I don't know that. It—it
was just for sale in an antique store, and in
fact, a priest from Virginia City came in and
told me about it. And I went up the next day

and bought it. And we have it in our home in Carson City now. It's of no particular value; it's a nice piece— a beautiful piece of work, and oddly enough, looked exactly like the golden rooster. But I don't know of any past history.

What conclusions did you draw or do you now draw from this case, the Golden Rooster vs. the United States government or the United States government vs. the Golden Rooster?

What do you mean by conclusions?

Well, what conclusions insofar as the intrusion of government into the lives of citizens and their activities.

Well, of course, it naturally seemed utterly and absolutely ridiculous to me and to my attorneys and to my friends and all the hundreds of people that wrote to us, that the government would waste their time doing such a thing as they did on this, but I guess that somebody read the law and decided that they ought to go confiscate the rooster. At the time I said it seemed like the government might have better things to do with their time. And I still feel the same way. Certainly there's more important things to do than that, and time has proven that the government apparently didn't feel that it was—that the existing gold act was right, and they've since changed the law so that you can own all the gold you want to. So, the conclusion must be that the government was wrong.

In the new Nugget we had a—the restaurant which we've been discussing about the golden rooster. It was called the Golden Rooster Room. I had decided early on that fried chicken was a good item to serve because, number one, the price is quite stable and cheap, and you can sell it at a reasonable price and everybody likes chicken. But how

to cook it and how to serve it was the next question, so I started inquiring around and eventually went to a great number of restaurants that specialized in chicken all over the country. I went to some in Denver, I went to some small towns in Illinois, a man that had a chain of restaurants that served chicken. Then about this time, there was a chicken being served called Kentucky Fried Chicken, and I heard about a place in Salt Lake City called Harmon's cafe which was serving this chicken. This was, of course, the Colonel Sanders' Kentucky Fried Chicken. At this time, that didn't mean much to me, but I did go to Salt Lake and tasted the chicken and felt that, beyond any question of doubt, it was the best chicken I'd tasted anywhere. The method of cooking it in the volume that we were going to be cooking for this big room, was rather unsatisfactory. In fact, when I went up I took Frank Green with me. And, Colonel Sanders' method of cooking the chicken was the seasoning was put in with the flour, the chicken was dipped in egg batter and then into the flour, and then it was put in a regular pressure cooker, a home-type pressure cooker only a large size that had hot grease in it, and it was cooked for ten or twelve minutes and under pressure, and then the chicken was taken out. It was not greasy, and it was—you could cook it very fast under this method. But the system of handling the grease made it extremely hard to keep the cooking area clean and was really rather a messy situation.

About that time I heard about a cooker called the "Henny Penny" cooker, so I get on a plane, go back East again and look at the Henny Penny cooker. This was built like a restaurant deep fat fryer, except that it had a lid which came down and you clamped shut and the chicken was cooked in deep fat under pressure, same as—exactly the same as the Colonel was cooking. So I decided that

I'd get the franchise from the Colonel using his spices, but I would use the Henny Penny cooker. He didn't like this idea, but finally agreed to do it.

It produced a very fine product, a very good chicken, and the Colonel came out once to advertise the chicken. We called it Kentucky Fried Chicken at that time, when we first opened. He was supposed to come out every so often, every few months, and go on radio and speak to service clubs and promote the chicken because we were paying him a franchise of five cents per chicken. Well, time went on—a couple of years went on and we'd only seen the Colonel once; well, I didn't like this very well. I wrote him, he kept promising to come out; and so finally I decided well this was ridiculous paying this five cents and decided to develop my own seasoning. This we did and were successful at getting a good seasoning, and we went ahead using our own seasoning, dropped the franchise and continued using, of course, the Henny Penny cookers.

About that time I got the idea of opening some chicken take-out restaurants, much the same as what is known today as the Kentucky Fried Chicken take-out places. And, I eventually had two in Reno, one in Stockton. These did very well and made money. And I was operating them. Each one had a manager, and I had one man overseeing all of them.

Early on, at the point that I started the—we called them Dick Graves' Chicken Coops. Rich, my son, was in the last year of high school, and I bought a piece of property at Kings Beach, California [Lake Tahoe], and we built a little small Chicken Coop on the highway side of this property, and Rich started in business up there. I'd have to go back and figure what year that was, but it was the last year he was in high school. And he subsequently ran it every summer from the Fourth of July to Labor Day and every

year through high school and then through his four years in college, and made enough money out of that so that I never had to buy him any clothes or any books or give him any money for school at all. He made it all out of his little Chicken Coop at Kings Beach. It was hard work for him, but excellent training, and he learned a great deal from this experience. I'm sure that it means a lot to him today. He presently has Rich's Discount Liquors across from the Nugget in Sparks, doing very well with it. In fact, right at the moment he's enlarging the operation.

Getting back to the Colonel and his seasoning. What is there about that particular seasoning that he has that makes it so good? What is the secret? What was the secret of yours?

It's a whole combination of spices. Also one other thing that we learned was that you couldn't use regular salt. We used powdered salt. And the big reason for that was that you mixed the seasoning and the salt in with the flour in a fifty-gallon galvanized can, [and] regular salt would gradually work to the bottom, and you would have salty chicken when you got down to the last of the flour. So we went to a special powdered salt. I have the formula someplace for the chicken seasoning, but I don't think I have it right available here.

Now is the method of cooking the chicken in the present restaurant in the Nugget the same as when you did it?

Exactly!

They have the Henny Penny cookers?

They have the Henny Penny cookers; they have—of course, later, brand-new models that

do a better job and have grease filters on them and everything, just more advanced model than what we had. But it's the same identical system.

Is there some secret in using a particular type of cooking oil or is it just chicken fat that's used?

No, no. It's a regular cooking oil. I don't exactly know what's used now, and I don't recall what we used. One particular thing on the fried chicken that made a great deal of difference was that we paid a little more money for our chicken, but the chickens were graded within two ounces of two and a half pounds, either two ounces above or two ounces below. There could not be a great variance in the weight of the chicken. The reason for this was that, if you had some two-pound chickens and you had some three-pound chickens, then one time the customer'd get a great big piece of breast and a great big leg and the next time he'd get a small one. So that, again, it comes back to portion control, so that the customer gets the same size piece of chicken every time he comes in.

When you were dealing with the Colonel were you buying your chickens from his operation?

No, he never did sell chickens. You bought chickens from regular suppliers. Most the chickens are raised in—at that time were raised in Georgia and trucked out here fresh, iced, never frozen.

Now did you ever buy your chickens from Petaluma? I understand that was a huge processing center for—.

Yes, we bought lots of chickens from the Petaluma, California area.

But it was mainly the seasoning that the Colonel supplied and that's what you pay him a franchise fee for?

Yes, the seasoning plus the method of cooking in the pressure cookers.

And he started it all back, wherever it was—?

Yes, he started back in Kentucky; in fact, he didn't start into the chicken business until he was sixty-six years old.

He's done mighty well for himself. He's still going strong. In fact, he had dinner with us up here at the Lake one evening. He's a very, very fine gentleman. It is unfortunate that he just got so busy that he couldn't get out and seem to take care of me. So, we had to sort of get a divorce, I guess. [Chuckling]

One item that I forgot to mention on the new Nugget was the mosaic of a rooster. This was on the outside of the building, close to the main entrance. This was fourteen feet high and was executed by Larry Argiro who is a professor of Arts at the State University of New York at New Paltz. It contains thirty thousand pieces of Venetian glass and laminated—some of the pieces of glass are laminated with gold leaf. It was very beautifully done, and he came out and helped install it on the front of the Nugget. It still is there today. I can't recall just how I found out about Mr. Argiro. I think it was from some article that I read about him or something, someplace, but he did do a fine job and it still is a beautiful piece of work—looks like it had just been put up.

How long did it take him to complete the rooster?

Oh, I would say several months. It was all in various colors, and it wasn't particularly

meant to duplicate the golden rooster; it was just a large, beautiful rooster with quite a bit of gold in it. There were lots of colors in it.

He did it on site?

No, it was done in New York, and then shipped out—he brought it out on the plane and it was done in sections on plywood, and then these were put up. He supervised putting them on the front of the building.

Do you recall the total cost of the piece of work?

No, I don't, I don't have that at all. It wasn't cheap by any means, but it really added to the front of the Nugget, the huge statue of Last Chance Joe was on one side and the Golden Rooster over on the other and then with the names of some of the restaurants on the front of the building, made a nice-looking, pleasing-looking building and a pleasing entrance to the building.

Since we've moved across the street, why, of course, I had the space on the north side of B Street where the old Nugget used to be, which was seventy-five by a hundred and forty feet, on my hands. And I come up with the idea of putting in a Polynesian-type restaurant. This is probably because I'd spent some time in Hawaii and in French Polynesia and Papeete, Tahiti, and I'd visited other types of restaurants like Trader Vic's and decided to use the space of the old Nugget and put in a first-class Polynesian restaurant. I, of course, immediately talked to my good friend Frank Green, and he and I made a whole series of trips to Denver, the Los Angeles area, Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, Oakland—these are the ones I can remember—and visited the Polynesian restaurants that were operating in these various places. We started putting ideas together, and one of our biggest

problems was the fact that we had to design the Polynesian restaurant around some of the existing equipment and kitchen facilities that we had in the old Nugget. This was the economical way to do it because we naturally still had the walk-in boxes, the dishwashing setup, the bar; these were all left over from the Nugget that we didn't take across the street.

So, Frank found a man by the name of Eli Hedley, who had put in some Polynesian places. He'd done the decorating. He lived in Anaheim, and in fact had some Polynesian-type shops in Disneyland. And he went around to various places doing the decorating of Polynesian restaurants. He came up and we spent a lot of time discussing it, and finally he came right up and brought up loads of material and worked out his ideas along with the ones that I had picked up in Hawaii and Tahiti, and we came up with Trader Dick's.

One funny thing that happened with Frank and I—in most of these places that we'd go into, we'd go in maybe at two, three o'clock in the afternoon or maybe in the morning when it wasn't busy and we'd just walk in and sort of like we belonged there and often nobody would ever say anything. They would just think that—I don't know what they thought, but nobody ever bothered us and we'd look the place over and make sketches and gather ideas; sometimes we'd introduce ourselves to some employee or somebody that was around, tell them what we were doing, but most often it wasn't even necessary. However, in Oakland, we had gone there particularly to see the Trader Vic's place; this is Vic Bergeron. This was his original Trader Vic's. And we went there particularly to check out the Chinese oven, the smoke oven. This is an oven in which they smoke duck and ribs and chicken. It was made out of heavy fire brick, fired with gas heat and also with burning wood in order to produce the smoke flavor.

We were in the process of looking this over and along come Vic himself and wanted to know what the hell we were doin' in there, and we told him, "Well, we just kinda wanted to look over this oven," [chuckling] and he politely told us to leave. Well, by this time we had enough information and Frank had seen the ovens and he made a sketch of it and we went ahead and built them at the Trader Dick's in Sparks.

Trader Vic, through his attorneys, threatened to sue us because of using the name Trader Dick's. We countered with a polite, "Go ahead." And really hoping that he would because the publicity from it would have been enormous because I had a perfect right, my name being Dick, to call my place Trader Dick's, being his name was Vic. Apparently, his attorneys decided that this was the case, and they unfortunately [laughing] dropped the suit.

At Trader's we decided to open with a few gaming tables and slots, and I put a young man in to operate the place who was working for us at the time, had been in Carson and also in Sparks, by the name of Ollie Balmer. He had originally operated the Oregon Trail Cafe for me in Mountain Home, Idaho. He did a fine job and operated the place for quite a few years.

Just inside the entrance to Trader's was a large lava rock wall, an idea that I'd gotten from the Canlis Restaurant in Honolulu. This wall had water trickling down over it and had a dozen to eighteen orchid plants hanging from it. We made arrangements with a lady in town who knew how to take care of orchids, and she would take the plants out when they needed care and bring in new plants, and it was quite a spectacular sight as you walked in. It required a lot of care and quite a bit of expense. But it was a beautiful sight as you walked into the Trader's.

Trader's was a success from the day it opened. However, it just didn't prove out the place for gaming, and we eventually took out the games and slots, but continued to operate it as a restaurant. One interesting thing happened: one day we lost the chef, and to go out and find a Chinese chef for an operation of this type isn't quite exactly the easiest thing to do, especially in the Reno-Sparks area. But there was a young man by the name of Don Wai working as an assistant cook; I called him in and talked to him and asked him if he thought he could take over the chef's job. He was very surprised; he said, "I don't know, but if you think so, I try hard." He is still chef at Trader Dick's at the present Nugget, and this is twenty years later. So, it's quite apparent he did a very good job, and he still is doing a tremendous job at Trader Dick's. He's a very good friend of ours.

At first we didn't use the full area that we had of the old Nugget. Later it was enlarged and the full space was used, adding some other dining rooms. We used entertainment from time to time, and later on after I sold to John, he added a small VIP room, much the same as he has in the new Trader's in the new Nugget. This was a very good success—very big success, this VIP room.

We opened Trader's on November 13, 1958. This is the same year that we moved across the street. I would like to read from the inside cover of the first menu that we had at Trader's. This is in the form of a letter on the inside cover of the first menu. It says,

Dear folks: None of these recipes are mine; none of them have made me or the place famous. How could they? Trader Dick's is brand-new. I've connived, schemed, borrowed, and begged for all the ideas and recipes we have here. They are the very best I

could steal from all the top Cantonese and Polynesian restaurants from Honolulu to New York, and I ought to know. I've snooped in all of them, I've swiped menus, bribed and talked to bartenders and cooks, and copied every good thing I could find. So that's how Trader Dick's came to be. No sense fooling you, might as well tell the truth.

Dick Graves

Incidentally, one thing I forgot to say was that naturally none of the bartenders in the area knew how to mix Polynesian drinks. There was a small Polynesian bar in San Francisco called Tiki Bob's. This was owned and operated by Bob Bryant. I went in and talked to Bob one day and told him my problem, and he offered to come up and spend a couple weeks and train the bartenders. This he did and did an excellent job for us and got us off to a good start instead of everybody fumbly' around not knowing what they were doing. I haven't seen Bob for several years; he was in Honolulu, and the last I heard from him, he was operating a food concession for the Navy somewhere in Japan.

I've got one of the original cocktail menus. This was made in the form of the Easter Island aku-aku head. These are the famous huge stone statues that are found on Easter Island which lies west of Chile in the Pacific Ocean. Nobody knows their origin; they have the long—long face and long nose, and we used this as a logo for Trader Dick's.

I see we have a Lotus Cup for seventy-five cents. "My friend Johnny Kan, who has the famous Kan's Restaurant in San Francisco's Chinatown gave me this wonderful, delightful cocktail. Served in a champagne glass, I find the ladies are very fond of this. Trader Dick."

The Molokai Mike was a dollar. "Fogcutter, a vase full of light runs, fresh juices, perfected by Trader Vic and copied by Trader Dick, \$1.25." "Zombie, our version is Don the Beachcomber's original Lethal Libation." This was only a dollar and a half. The Easter Island Grog (this was for two people), Cuban rums, Jamaican ruins, served in a communal bowl with long straws and a camellia floating in the drink. The Scorpion was somewhat the same kind of a drink—you could buy it for one, or for four. These drinks were all new to Reno people, and they were very well accepted. The prices, as you can see, were ridiculous when you think of them in this day and age. All of these prices now would run several dollars.

What was the most expensive drink in that cocktail menu?

Oh, the Mai-Tai was a dollar and a quarter. Of course, we also served what we called *Pu-Pu*s which were appetizers—spareribs, stuffed shrimp, crab puffs, chicken livers, rumaki; they were a dollar for each tray of them.

The other items in the main menu: We had the Flaming Dagger Brochette for \$2.95; a New York steak, \$3.95; Hawaiian ham and eggs, \$2.95; of course, we served Mahi-Mahi which is Hawaiian fish, we brought it in from Honolulu especially for Traders s; we had combination dinners, for instance, the Hawaiian dinner was \$3.50 a person, it included assorted *PuPus*, Trader Dick's soup, almond chicken, beef teriyaki, Mandarin pressed duck, Chinese peas and water chestnuts. There were other combination dinners. This made it easy for people who didn't know exactly how to order from this type of menu; they could order the combination dinner.

What was Trader Dick's soup?

It was kind of sort of a Chinese soup, like a Chinese corn soup, I think, as I remember it, probably whatever the chef wanted to put up that particular day [chuckling].

Incidentally, we had special ice cream made. We had the local ice cream company make up extremely rich ice cream just for Trader's; they made up a rum ice cream, and a macadamia nut ice cream, and a coconut ice cream. These were super delicious, and I often used to sneak over and have one of these along late in the evening. In fact, many times I would go over to Trader's on the nights that I stayed over at the Nugget—I'd go over and go back in the kitchen and eat with the Chinese off the work tables in the back; many, many times I did this. I just asked them to fix me up something—it didn't really make much difference what—and sit down and eat with two or three of them.

Which ice cream company in Reno was that?

I don't remember who did that, at that time. I used to like to go over and visit with an old Chinese that worked there. He worked in the—mainly in the preparation of food; he didn't do too much work with the Chinese woks; this is what you cook Chinese food in. He did mostly the preparations, the chopping of the vegetables and preparing the meats. His name was Jimmy Chinn. He worked there for many years, he must be very old now. I used to like to go in and often eat with him and visit with him because he was a very fine gentleman. In fact, I must go and—I must find out if he's still around.

At that time at the Nugget, of course, we had the coffee shop, the Golden Rooster Room, the Round House which was a steak house, and also the Prime Rib Room. Now the Prime Rib Room was developed in the

Virginia Room, which was originally put in for a banquet room. We found that we would get more use out of it by making it a prime rib room, and I went down to Los Angeles area and checked out Lawry's which were famous for their prime rib, and found out how they cooked it, which was completely encased in rock salt. And they served it from a cart; I bought one of these real fancy carts and cooked the prime rib in rock salt and served it much the same as they did in Lawry's, along with Yorkshire pudding and the works, using of course, the finest of beef. And the room was an immediate success, and even today, John is still cooking the prime rib encased in rock salt and is probably the only restaurant in the United States that's still doing it.

Which cut of beef did you use?

Well, it's the rib, the prime rib—always choice, never anything less than choice and often prime.

Then how was that prepared in the rock salt?

Two rib roasts were put in a big pan and then they were completely covered with rock salt and cooked in this. And the reason that the ribs were better cooked this way than any other method, is that the rock salt seemed to distribute the heat evenly; it didn't cause the ribs to be salty, but distributed the heat evenly completely throughout and the ribs came out moist and juicy, and came out just the way you wanted them according to the time that you set them in. This Prime Rib Room was opened on September 28, '58.

During all this time, we kept pushing the no parking meters in Sparks. And parking, of course, was again, one of our biggest assets. It is even today. It's a real funny thing; just a

few days ago I read a letter to the editor in the *Gazette* which reads as follows:

Editor *Reno Evening Gazette*: For the second time this year, we have had four friends visit us from out of state. This time when they left they said that they wished they could someday see downtown Reno other than driving around looking for a parking space. Both times we've tried to eat dinner, see the sights and gamble some in Reno, we drove for an hour looking for a place to park. Finally we went to the MGM because they have parking. We would rather have gone to Reno. Even our family, when we go out for an evening, go to the Sparks Nugget because we know there will be parking. I don't do any shopping downtown for the same reason—no parking. What is the reason for all the new hotels and casinos if one cannot get to them? Signed, Lucy Hansen, Reno.

I'd like to mention at this point several people who helped immensely in helping myself and Frank Green in the design and final plans of the—of all of the operations, the new Nugget and Trader's and all of the various kitchens and operations. One in particular was Richard Flambert of Flambert [Company] who were restaurant consultants in San Francisco. We brought them in quite often to consult with us and used many of Dick's ideas and suggestions. Another man that was very cooperative, two men, but one in particular, was Abbie Wilson and Ray Castor. These were people who worked with Dohrmann Hotel Supply Company; Ray was the local manager, and Abbie was from San Francisco. Whenever we started on a

new project, Abbie was immediately called in, and he was just beautiful to work with because he was extremely practical, he didn't push to sell a piece of equipment; in fact, I've seen him come up with ideas that saved us thousands of dollars in equipment that he could have sold us had he wanted to push it in another manner. His thinking was always to do the job the best for the least money and the most practical way of doing it. He was a great help to Frank and me. Ray Castor was very cooperative, too, of course all the time.

Is that company still in business?

Dohrmann Hotel Supply is still in business; in fact, I saw Ray Castor just recently, run into him over in San Francisco. He's in the San Francisco area now. I hadn't seen him for many years. I just saw him the other day.

Is John Ascuaga using their expertise now?

Yes, he's used them right along, bought hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of equipment from them.

Let's see—. I've always said that to be a success in business you have to be in the right place at the right time and you have to get some good "breaks" (and that's in quotes, b-r-e-a-k-s) along the way. After building the new Nugget I decided that we should enter the new restaurants and kitchens in a national magazine called *Institutions* magazine's yearly contest. I had Doyle-McKenna, my advertising agency, put together a package and send it in. I must say a word here about Howard Doyle and Gene McKenna. They handled my advertising and publicity and promotion for years. Though many of the ideas were mine, they did an excellent job of putting them together and setting up the

promotion and the advertising. We worked very closely together all over the years, and they're still handling all of John Ascuaga's advertising right at this present time. Prior to the time that they took over the advertising, a young man had come to work for me by the name of Fred Davis. Fred had been with, I believe it was, KOH or KOLO; he came in as sort of a advertising and public relations man. Then Doyle-McKenna took over the advertising and Fred continued in the capacity of public relations for all the time that I had the Nugget and quite a few years after John had it. He eventually left John and is presently working in some capacity with the Reno-Sparks Convention Bureau.

How was Doyle-McKenna selected in the first place?

I don't really know how I selected them. I guess I just became acquainted with them; they were one of the few advertising agencies in the area at that time, and the other main one was Tom Wilson; he had done a little work for me. But I liked these two young men, and they came in and did a very fine job.

So anyway, they put a package together, and they sent it in to Institutions magazine and I proceeded to sort of forget about it. On April 21, 1959 I received the following telegram:

Happy to inform you Nugget restaurants won overall first place award in our 1959 Food Service and Sanitation contest. The Nugget is the only first award winner among all national competitors in entire restaurant division. Looking forward to seeing you for presentation award banquet in Chicago, May 12. STOP. CONGRATULATIONS!

Institutions Magazine

Well, this was a tremendous break because this was the leading magazine in the restaurant field saying that we had won the first place award in all restaurants in the whole United States in their contest in 1959 in the little town of Sparks, Nevada. We had always gone back to the restaurant show. I would generally take John Ascuaga with me, maybe one or two other employees, one or two of the chefs. We went to the restaurant show every May in Chicago, so of course we went this year and received the award. We played this up very big; we had plaques in each restaurant; we started using the slogan: "Home of award-winning restaurants, and it meant a great, great deal to the success of the Nugget itself in selling the people on the idea that we were leaders in the food service field in the casino business. This feeling still exists today in the Nugget because John Ascuaga has done a tremendous job in carrying through the general idea of keeping food and food service absolutely tops in quality and type of service that we had made so prominent over the years. He hasn't let it slip in any way, and it still is one of the reasons for the continued success of the Nugget, almost twenty years after we won this award.

That day when you received the telegram, what was your reaction and the reaction of your family?

Well, naturally it was unbelievable because it was just really a sort of a chance thing that I made this application for entry into this contest. We sent back plans of the restaurants, of floor plans of the restaurants and the kitchens a whole series of photographs, copies of menus. Incidentally, the Trader Dick's menu received a special award later on (in some magazine—I can't remember just which

one) because of its format. But we were—well, the whole Nugget was very excited about this because this was a tremendous thing to receive this award in the little town of Sparks. Here we are competing with all the big hotels and big fancy restaurants all over the United States and to win this award was an immense break, and believe me, I made the most of it in promoting the idea and pushing it and selling the idea to the public that our restaurants had won this award. This was an outside authority—somebody else—telling us, telling the public that we were doing a good job; and this, of course, you can't beat. There's no way that you can buy this type of advertising.

The employees shared in this celebration too?

Oh naturally, they were very proud of it. They were very happy, and I think at the time we had buttons made; every employee in the house wore them: "Home of the awardwinning restaurants," things of this type and every menu, every news item, every ad carried that slogan for many years afterwards.

Incidentally, *Restaurant Hospitality*, a magazine for commercial foods service management, came out this month, October, 1978 with a cover story on John Ascuaga and the Nugget, titled "John Ascuaga's Nugget; Diamond in the Rough." It is an excellent five-page article, very well done and very factual. The cover has a photo in color of John sitting on the corner of his desk. He should get a lot of "mileage" out of this article.

Through this *Institutions* magazine award we received many, many write-ups in various newspapers, magazines, and particularly restaurant magazines. I see one in American Restaurant magazine of September 1960. It's a cover story. The front cover shows a series of pictures, one of the Round House and one of the Golden Rooster Room, a sketch of

myself, and it's titled: "The Diner that Grew and Grew and Grew into Seven Plush Food Operations."

Take a twenty-stool diner, some showmanship, and with the ingenuity of a Dick Graves, in just a few years you will have built a million dollar food service operation, largest in the state with five distinctive restaurants under one roof, plus banquet facilities and snackbar, a Polynesian restaurant across the Street, and a hundred and five room, ultra-modern motor lodge a block away. A look at Graves' vast casino operation today is staggering considering that it all started just five years ago, seating capacity is provided for almost a thousand persons at a time.

All of these articles meant just untold publicity to the Nugget, as I've said before, again, when outside authorities say that you had done a top job. It means so much more than saying it yourself.

Which menu did the American Restaurant cite?

They gave the creamed spinach recipe which we served in the Golden Rooster Room, the brochettes of beef—this was also served in the Golden Rooster Room, a special Bordelaise sauce that we served. The creamed spinach was an excellent recipe.

Would you mind giving us that recipe now?

No, I can give it to you. Six pounds of bacon; four ounces of garlic; eighteen pounds of onion finely-chopped; one and a half pounds of melted butter; eighteen ounces of flour; two gallons of milk; thirty-

six pounds or one case of frozen spinach thawed, well-chopped and drained; eight ounces of seasoning salt; three ounces of monosodium glutamate and one and a half ounces of white pepper. Chop bacon and garlic fine, add onions, saute in butter for ten minutes, add flour mixing thoroughly, cook ten minutes longer. Stir in milk and cook until mixture thickens. Add spinach, let cook for about ten minutes, add seasoning, cook until flavors are well-blended and mixture is thick. The yield is about two hundred servings.

Just right for a family of four.

That's right! [Laughter] Actually, this was quite an article 'cause it covered sixteen pages. So, you can see, it was an extremely comprehensive article.

Another item in this *American Restaurant* magazine article is regarding the Golden Rooster Room.

"Your waiters offer the most refreshingly different service I have ever had, is a comment typical of many received from guests constantly since Dick Graves decided to hire University of Nevada students as part time waiters in the Golden Rooster Room. Over forty of the University men students participate in the program at the Nugget. All must pass rigid requirements as to job need, ability to keep up grades, personality, cleanliness, etc. Each is put through a vigorous training program. It has been estimated that nearly three hundred students have been helped through college as participants in the work program. In May, in fact, the students awarded Graves a plaque in a surprise

presentation for all the help he has given them and all other students before them. In addition, the Nugget also awards two two-thousand dollar scholarships each year to deserving graduates from Sparks High School. Currently there are seven boys and five girls enrolled through the scholarships in the University of Nevada.

Children are not just tolerated at the Nugget, they are welcome, in fact. The youngsters have their own special children's theater on the second floor away from the hustle and bustle of the restaurants and the rest of the operation. Here seventy-five children can be accommodated at free movies and under the supervision of the projectionist and a nurse at all times. Adults are required to register their children in and out with the attendant, so there is no confusion as to the whereabouts of any of the children at any time.

One of the big drawing attractions of the Nugget is its acres of free parking. Dick Graves continually advertises in the Reno paper calling attention to the unlimited free parking in Sparks, which is an irritant to some downtown Reno operators where parking meters line the street. On busy weekends a Volkswagen bus tours all Nugget parking lots to provide free transportation to and from the restaurants.

Dick Graves' enthusiasm for the unusual and the gimmick knows no bounds. During the last six years he has featured many attractions, [such] as a chimpanzee, a monkey, a mynah bird, a hardrock miner and burro and outdoor ice skating show, deer

and fishing contests, a Basque festival attended by six thousand people, a flagpole sitter, midgets, shrunken heads, helicopters, wood carvers, miniature cars, old restored fire engines, real cowboys and wooden Indians, a life-size nativity scene, art exhibits, a wheelbarrow containing sixty-one thousand silver dollars, a bathtub full of silver dollars, and a specially designed fourteen carat solid gold rooster valued at forty thousand dollars. In addition he has distributed free, many thousands of dollars in cash during the last five years in one dollar checks.

These were the one-dollar checks that I printed in newspapers all over the West. So this article was very comprehensive and, again, meant a great deal to the continued success of the Nugget.

This article mentions the ice skating rink. I can't remember the exact time we put this in, but I think it was probably in the winter of 1959. This was in the parking area across the street from the block that the new Nugget was operated in. Somebody come along with the idea of putting in a skating rink. It sounded good to me, so they laid down many feet of pipe right on the parking lot, filled it with water, and had big compressors. We brought in a special power line for it, and created a free ice skating rink for anybody that wanted to use it. One day a guy came along that had some chimpanzees—and I think I've mentioned this before in our discussion—had some chimpanzees that could ice skate, so I hired him and the chimpanzees put on a show four or five times a day skating on the ice. Which was quite a success, and I think we used it for

six, seven months, and then probably went ahead and dropped it.

Tina and Bertha were not mentioned, why is that?

No, well that came later, that came after we built the new addition to the Nugget in 1961.

The shrunken heads, what's the story about them?

These were two shrunken heads that I bought; they were absolutely authentic. I think they came from Ecuador, if I'm not mistaken. We had them in a case in Trader Dick's. They were about three, four inches tall. I had them checked by curators and found out that they were authentic. They were rather ghastly-looking, and I had them in a case on display in Trader's with a little plaque underneath them that said the head on the left had belonged to a man who cashed a check at the Nugget that bounced, and the one on the right was the cashier that cashed it. This created a lot of laughs, and it was just another crazy gimmick that seemed to be what I thrived on and what people enjoyed seeing and what made the Nugget go.

What became of the heads?

I don't know. I've often wanted to ask John what he did with those. I'll have to do that sometime. I'd liked to have kept them myself, but of course they went with the Nugget when I sold it to John. I don't know whether he still has them or they just disappeared along the way. Actually, they'd be extremely valuable today.

You asked about the mynah bird, this was just something else that we had at Trader's to create some interest. I think we finally had to

get rid of it because mynah birds do an awful lot of screeching. Another rather interesting thing; Mrs. Graves and I came home from a trip someplace; we came through Miami and ran across a pet farm, and we fell in love with a little woolly monkey, which I decided to buy and bring home to the children. This was about the last thing [chuckling] we really needed at the house [laughing] a monkey with four children in the house anyway! But we brought it home and somehow the monkey was named—Flora named it Gilda. She was a very cute little thing. I built a rig for her that had cedar shavings on it, and she was on a little leash so that she could—this was about five feet square and had a post in the middle, and she was on a leash to where she could come out to the edge of this square—sort of square box. Believe it or not, Flora even toilet trained her. Finally we kept her at the house for quite a long time; and then after Trader's opened, I decided it might be an interesting thing there. So we built a special cage for her and put the monkey on display at Trader's, and people fell in love with her immediately and it drew a lot of attention, a lot of talk. We lost her because she caught pneumonia apparently from the air conditioning and died, so that was the end of the monkey story [chuckling]. But it was fun; all of these things seemed to add up to part of what made the Nugget click, part of what made Trader's click.

I notice in the—on the last page of this article there's a picture of Last Chance Joe; this was the old mining character from Virginia City that we used in a lot of promotions; he was known as Bad Water Bill; I've mentioned him before. He's standing looking at the caged parking meter just outside the entrance to the Nugget. Bud Van Erman is back of the bar that was known as the Golden Dragon Bar at Trader Dick. I had taken a picture of a Golden Dragon that was in the Golden

Dragon Restaurant at the Hawaiian Villiage in Honolulu, and this was copied by one of Eli Hedley's men, a sculptor, a woodcarver, and was done in heavy relief on the—the back bar was all gilded in gold leaf, really quite impressive.

The last two paragraphs in this article read:

Today Dick Graves' combined Sparks restaurant and casino operation has mushroomed into two buildings totalling over fifty-three thousand square feet and provide permanent employment for over five hundred and fifty persons. It has an annual payroll of over two and a half million dollars and has facilities to serve an average of forty-seven hundred food customers per day. And the days of vaudeville are not over, at least in Sparks, Nevada, the home of the Nugget where Dick will keep folks guessing and wondering whether what he will do next, but they can be sure of one thing, that whatever he comes up with, it will be "fantabulous!"

A little more detail on Harolds Club's children's theater across the Douglas Alley from their main building, which was always full of children, and it seemed like a great idea, so I designed this right into the new Nugget. It was on the second floor and was very nicely set up with theater seats. Incidentally, they were all-metal because the operator at Harolds Club had warned me not to put in cushion seats because the kids'd cut 'em all up.

The gentleman that operated the theater did a fabulous job, and he worked for many years at it. His name was Mr. Laveaga. We had a little, small waiting room and the children

were checked in; they could stay for a given length of time—I forget, there was some kind of a length of time that they could stay, and the parents had to, of course, pick them up in that length of time.

Another thing I designed into the Nugget, into the new operation, was a small room right off of my office for myself where I could stay over at night rather than to go home to Carson City. This was the first time I had really some—a decent place to stay and, again, it allowed me to stay over almost every other night at the Nugget, and then every other night, of course, I would go home and be with my family. This plan worked out reasonably well over all the years and was extremely handy for me to have this facility in the new Nugget.

During this time the children were attending high school or were they in college?

Well, at this time, Rich was seventeen and he later went to Claremont Men's College. Mary Kay was sixteen. She went to Santa Clara. Judy was thirteen and she went to Gonzaga in Spokane and later to Santa Clara. Joanne was eleven and in Saint Teresa's in Carson City. She went to Santa Clara also. I am using 1958 to arrive at these ages.

High school was Carson City High?

Yes, Carson City High. They entered into all the activities and everything in school. They had, I think, a very good time in school; they often talk about it. The twenty-seventh of August this year we celebrated my birthday up here at the Lake; all of the family was here except for Joanne and her children. We had a beautiful day; the weather cooperated, and it was a great family fun day.. They were— as they often do—going through the old albums,

photos of years past, laughing at how dumb, as they put it, they looked in those days. They went on to go to college, of course. Rich went to Claremont Men's College and then he went down to Berkeley, took a hotel-restaurant course. Mary Kay went to the Catholic University at Seattle for a couple of years, and then to Santa Clara and graduated from Santa Clara. Judy went to Gonzaga [University] in Spokane, and had a very interesting third year; she spent her third year in Florence, Italy, at Gonzaga in Florence. She was majoring in art, and this was a tremendous experience which she often speaks of. Joanne decided to take up nursing and got part way through and then decided to get married, so she didn't finish her schooling; all of the other children did.

Now how many times did they come into Sparks and visit you at your place of business?

Not really too often. If Flora happened to be over in town shopping, why maybe we'd make arrangements—we'd have lunch together. Maybe she'd come over with the children; we'd have dinner, but rather infrequently.

I imagine all of their birthday cakes were baked in the Nugget's bakery?

No, no, very few of them. Flora baked most of the cakes herself.

One interesting thing we did do, Judy was quite a baker. She loved the kitchen, she still does, and somewhere she got a recipe for a chocolate roll. This was a thin layer of chocolate cake—was baked in a cookie pan, and it was of a consistency which could be rolled up. So there was whipped cream spread on the chocolate—the chocolate cake was about a quarter of an inch thick—and then this was taken and rolled into a, what was

called, a chocolate roll. And, it was so good that I thought it ought to be introduced at the Nugget. So Judy came over one day, and we made quite a bit of fanfare about it. She put on a cook's outfit and cook's hat and taught Gene Berry, the head baker, how to make the chocolate roll. And then we featured it on the menu as "Judy's Chocolate Roll." This was on the menu for many years.

I think it was, a lot of times, little personal things like this that meant a great deal to the operation of the Nugget and things that you don't see too much any more in the operations of the casinos. It seems that the larger they get, the more difficult it is to do personalized, unusual little things like having such an item as Judy's Chocolate Roll. Of course, naturally, we took pictures of her showing Gene how to bake the chocolate roll. I remember how embarrassed she was and really how silly she thought the idea was [chuckling], but I thought it was great and it went over great. And the picture was used in the papers and magazine stories and news items, created an interesting personal touch to the operation of the casino, giving it more of a homespun atmosphere than most casinos were getting at that time.

Well, many of the recipe items that we started and were successful with during the first days of the new Nugget are still being served today. Among them, for instance, the lemon ice box pie; this was not served very many places, yet it's an extremely good pie, and lots of customers come in especially just for—for this particular pie. Another item was the pecan pie. We had an excellent recipe for this. I had many people ask me, want to get the recipe for this pie, maybe this'd be somebody running another casino or another restaurant somewhere. I remember Bud Simpson from Ely wanted it once. So I said, "Well Bud, I don't know; I'll give this to you if you'll absolutely promise not to tell anybody because it's my

own recipe and I've developed this and I just don't want people to copy it." So, we went up to the office, and I said, "Now you're not gonna go back to Ely and give this to everybody that comes along?"

"Oh, absolutely not."

So I reached down in my desk drawer and pulled out a Karo syrup can, and the recipe was on the Karo syrup can. I said, "This is my secret recipe." But they're still serving the same pie today. Still serving the same chocolate brownies that we made years ago. Many of the recipes for various types of food items are the ones that were started and were successful. The German chocolate cake, for instance, that's served in the Circus Room—maybe I've mentioned this before—was a recipe that Flora had at home, and we decided to use this in the Nugget. It's prepared from scratch, no pre-mixes; it's done by the original recipe that Flora had. It's still being served and still the same excellent cake.

Another item that we started with in the Circus Room and is still being served is the Caesar salad. Certainly not very many showrooms serve a Caesar salad today as their regular salad. However, the Circus Room or the Celebrity Room, as they now call it, still does. Most times a Caesar salad is prepared at the table, by a waiter in front of you. This presents somewhat of a problem because a Caesar salad is a rather complicated thing to put together, must be done exactly the same all the time or it naturally comes out different. Well, you can't have different waiters preparing the salad in a big room like the Celebrity Room if you have forty waiters; it's gonna come out forty different ways. So, I decided that we'd do it in the kitchen just before the Circus Room opened each night. This was done to a very strict recipe, the best imported olive oils were used, the best imported anchovies, romaine, of course, and

grated romano cheese. So, it's mixed by one person and consequently comes out the same. I had it recently this year when I went down to the Red Skelton show, and it was just as good as the first day we served it. This is a lot of credit to John to see that these things were continued as well as the quality of all of the food in the Nugget, because it's been one of the big reasons for the Nugget's success.

I mentioned about Fred Davis and Howard Doyle and Gene McKenna. There's one other gentleman I ought to mention, is Don Allen. This goes back to when we were operating in Idaho. Of course, we had created Last Chance Joe up there, and Don was in Twin Falls with a radio station there. And he did the voice of Last Chance Joe for radio spots. They were excellent. He was about twenty-five or -six years old at the time, but he could do an old-timer's voice, an old miner, an old Forty-niner, or whatever you want to say. And this voice came over very well, and we had a lot of fun making all kinds of different radio spots using Last Chance Joe. When we moved to Nevada, why, I tried to have somebody down here do them. I never could find anybody that could properly get the right job done with the tapes. So, Don continued to make the tapes up in Twin Falls, Idaho for us for many years, as we used them on radio stations all over Nevada.

A big event that happened in 1959 at the Nugget was the first Basque festival. This was called the First Western Basque Festival. My wife being Basque, the fact that there were lots of Basques in Idaho and Nevada, and that my manager John Ascuaga was a Basque, plus the fact that I had—Flora and I had visited the Basque country several times, brought on this idea of putting on a Basque festival. I really—at the start of it I never dreamed that it was going to become the tremendous event that it was or I probably never would have done

it—because of the enormous amount of work that was involved in putting it together.

I worked with, mainly with Robert Laxalt and John Ascuaga; the actual committee members were Bob Laxalt, John Ascuaga, Martin Esain of Reno, Dominique Gascue of Reno, John Laxalt of Reno, Joe Micheo of Gardnerville, and Paul Yparraguirre of Reno and also Pete Supera of Carson City. These were all, naturally, Basques. We met, and one thing led to another and “Frenchy” (that's Bob Laxalt) went to work and was successful in making arrangements for the Spanish ambassador and the French ambassador to attend the Basque festival. The reason, of course, that both the Spanish and French ambassadors were asked to attend, is because the Basque country in Europe runs along the Pyrenees Mountains in the north of Spain and the south of France. Therefore, there are Spanish Basques and French Basques.

The celebration was held on Saturday, June sixth, and Sunday, June seventh. There were other diplomatic and state officials that attended; they included the Marques de la Vera, the Spanish consul, Rene Naggjar. Making a special trip to the United States in honor of the festival was Senior Castor Uriarte and daughter, Senorita Uriarte, representatives of the Basque Academy in Bilbao, Spain.

Other official visitors were Governor Grant Sawyer, Lieutenant Governor Rex Bell, Congressman Walter Baring, Mayor Len Harris of Reno, and Mayor C. E. Richards of Sparks. The main Sunday festival was held in a fenced and decorated area adjacent to the Dick Graves; Nugget in Sparks. And of course, my wife is Basque, and I was the sponsor of the festival. There were approximately five thousand people that attended.

I missed in adding or listing the committee members, I missed Peter Echeverria. Pete was

committee chairman. Actually, Pete and Bob and John and I met more regularly probably than the full committee, and Pete and Bob were responsible for really putting this whole thing together.

When did you first have the idea for the festival?

Gee, I don't know, sometime—a couple three months prior to this I suppose, must have taken several months to get all of it together, you know.

What were the daily events?

Well, the list of daily events reads something like this: “Saturday, June sixth, reunion parties at Basque hotels and bars. Seven-thirty p.m., dinner for dignitaries in the Virginia Room at Dick Graves’ Nugget in Sparks.” This was quite a formal dinner and was served to all the special people that came to attend it. “Ten p.m., the La Jota, which is a Basque dance, and general dancing for all festival visitors in the Virginia Room of the Nugget. Music by Basque orchestra of Jimmy Jausaro.” Jimmy is from Boise; Flora and I knew him up there, and he’s played the accordion at Basque gatherings and dances his whole life. He’s done a great deal for the Basque dancers in Boise.

“Sunday, June seventh, nine-thirty a.m., Basque Mass at Saint Thomas Aquinas Cathedral, Reno, celebrated Father Jose Pena, S. J., Eleven a.m., memorial service to the late United States Senator Patrick A. McCarran, Mountain View Cemetery on West Fourth Street in Reno.” This was because Senator McCarran had passed a bill through Congress which allowed Basques to emigrate into the United States to work as sheepherders for the Basque sheep people, because it was so

difficult for them to find people that could stay out in the mountains and herd the sheep. And this was a special bill which went through Congress, and McCarran was responsible for it.

“Twelve noon, champion sheep dog exhibition near Sparks.” This was extremely interesting. The sheep dog exhibition that preceded the main festival was attended by more than two thousand people. It featured the champion sheep dogs, King and Sam, owned by Charles Null of Dixon, California. King, who has appeared in such movies as *Proud Rebel* and *Wild as the Wind*, recently won the Far West International Dog Trials for the sixth consecutive year. It was just amazing to see what this dog could do with the sheep.

“Two p.m., Mus card game contest in the Virginia Room.” Mus is a typically Basque card game. “General festival entertainment two to five p.m. Costumed La Jota dancing by Reno children’s group. Dancing exhibition by Delphina and Diana Urresti of Boise. Basque songs by Winnemucca teenage group. Rock-and weight-lifting contest. La Jota dancing by Reno teenagers’ group. Folk dancing by Idaho teenagers’ group. Special dances by Delphina Urresti, Miss Boise of 1959. Specialty dancing by Diana Urresti of Boise. Tug-of-war between sheepmen and cattlemen. Basque folk dance exhibition by Terecita Osta of San Francisco.”

“Two p.m., welcome by Ambassador Jose Maria de Areilza of Spain. Welcome by Ambassador Herve Alphand of France. Txistu and drum-dancing exhibition by Vamalzain group of Juan Onatibia of New York City.” The txistu is like a fife; that’s the best way I can explain it, somewhat like a recorder, you know. Four p.m. we had the giant barbecue. This was held outside in the area where we had the festival. “Music by Basque orchestra Jimmy Jausaro of Boise.”

“Five p.m., reunion hour for the Basques from the seven provinces. Seven-thirty p.m., special entertainment by Los Churumbeles de España, Spain’s foremost musical group brought to Dick Graves’ Nugget especially for the Basque festival. Eight-thirty p.m., La Jota dancing for everyone.”

Needless to say, this was a—with five thousand people there—it was a tremendous festival. Everybody joined in and had a great, great time; many, many people came in Basque costumes. All of our family had on Basque clothes. The girls all had on the Basque dance uniform, dance costumes. Rich and myself had on white pants, white shirts with a red bandana and a beret. We had berets which we gave everyone. I had a great many of the Basque coat of arms, “ZazpiakBat,” printed in color on parchment paper. This means “Seven are One.” There are seven Basque provinces and they mean that seven provinces are one—as one. Down at the bottom it says, Basque coat of arms, souvenir of the First Western Basque Festival. Dick Graves’ Nugget Casino, Sparks, Nevada.” There was weight lifting, wood chopping, the tugof-war, all these various things. I see here where the weight-lifting champion was Ben Goitiandi of Boise,” a two hundred and fifty-three-pound cylinder raised to his shoulders sixteen times in five minutes.” Another weight-walking contest where they would carry these huge cylinders, one in each hand, they had metal holders at the top of them, and see how far they could walk carrying them.

The oldest Basque couple present was the mother and father of one of the committee members, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Yparraguirre. They were ninety-five and eighty-seven years old.

Were the employees of the Nugget costumed in Basque attire?

Yes, they had on white shirts, red bandana around their neck, and berets. We had the berets shipped in from Spain especially for it, red berets.

And the menu during those days, did it reflect a Basque influence?

Yes, it was lamb, and, naturally, Basque beans. I got some special huge, big copper pots that we cooked the beans in, great big—two and a half feet in diameter. They were actually antique copper pots I found someplace and bought them for the purpose of cooking these beans.

What was your role through the festival?

Well, I think I was just sort of the coordinator, that’s all. Pete Echeverria was the chairman of the committee, and he handled the emceeing of the whole show. Of Course, Pete is excellent at this. He introduced everybody; he introduced the events as they came along; he kept the ball rolling on the whole thing. I just kinda stayed in the background, saw that everything kept goin’.

And paid the bills.

Yes, [chuckling] I guess we could say that.

What kind of publicity did you receive out of this?

Well, naturally, there was lots of newspaper articles around in San Francisco and Sacramento, Salinas; all kinds of articles in the Basque country which, of course, didn’t mean anything to us really. The local papers carried the story heavily. Naturally, the place received a lot of publicity, and after all, these—many of these Basques that came

to the place, it was the first time they'd ever seen the Nugget in Sparks.

Incidentally, in the new Nugget in Sparks, and I don't think I've mentioned this anywhere, one of the bars was called the Basque Bar and was decorated with many of the—many artifacts that Flora and I had brought back from various trips to Spain. The Basque Bar is still there; it's been redecorated, and it's been redone with some photomurals of the Basque country. But the Basque Bar is still in the same position as it was at the time that the Basque festival was held.

Tell me about the September 12, 1959, issue of Saturday Evening Post.

This was rather interesting. A man came up from San Francisco by the name of Don Jones, a photographer, and wanted to cover the Basque festival. He was kind of a freelance photographer and author. And lo and behold, we got a two-page spread called "Proud Mountaineers." And it showed two Basque woodchoppers with the crowd behind them watching the woodchoppers standing chopping these—looks like about a fourteen-, sixteen-inch log, five feet long, chopping it in two. They're standing on the log, chopping between their feet. And it goes on to tell—the article tells who won the woodchopping contest and a little bit about the festival.

Would you read some of the excerpts from that?

This is titled "Proud Mountaineers:"

These muscular choppers were part of the fun and games at the first annual Western Basque Festival staged this past June at Reno and Sparks, Nevada.

Bonnie Elorrieta, left, and Ben Goitiandie both hail from the Spanish province of Vizcaya, where woodchopping contests are traditional festival features. There are French Basques, Spanish Basques, South American Basques, and our western mountain states, thousands of American Basques, who work mainly in the cattle-raising and sheep herding industries. But wherever they're settled, these sturdy and self-reliant people always remain Basques. The first Basques arrived on this continent from their homeland in the western Pyrenees as part of the California Gold Rush. Moving inland to Nevada, Utah, Idaho, they took over the hard and lonely job of herding sheep on their months long migrations from valley to mountain pasturage and back again.

In 1949 the late United States Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada, persuaded Congress to enact a private law for the relief of Basque aliens and many began migrating from Spain at that time. Young Basques are still brought home with their savings after few years, but more remain to become a colorful and individualistic part of the American scene.

Twenty-seven-year-old Ben Goitiandie won the wood chopping contest by cutting through the twenty-three inch aspen log in three and one-fourth minutes. His prize was fifty dollars and a trophy. Both men walked away from the contest with all their toes.

Up until that time, was there a Basque restaurant in the area?

Yes, there were a couple of Basque restaurants in Reno, in downtown Reno.

But never before a festival?

No, this was the first one. Now there's a Basque festival every year.

It takes place at the fairgrounds, doesn't it?

Yes.

Along in late '59, I had—during that year I'd been continuing to pick up and to buy houses in the two blocks west of the Nugget on the south side of B Street. I acquired all the houses in the block immediately west, and I could realize the necessity for hotel rooms. However, I had somewhat of a problem because the motels had been extremely cooperative with me in every way. They sent me thousands of customers, recommended the Nugget to all their customers and this was not only Sparks motels, but Reno motels. Therefore, I was quite concerned about building a motel of our own, in fear of alienating these friends and losing the business that they had been sending us.

I conceived the idea of building a motel owners' motel. I wrote every motel owner in town, and told them that we had plans to build a motel in Sparks and offered to sell stock to any and all of them that wished to become part owners in the Nugget Motor Lodge, which would be known as a motel owners' motel. Actually not too many took me up on the deal. However, some did. Here are some of the stockholders—all motel owners:

John J. Ascuaga
John P. Bevilacqua
Dario E. Bevilacqua
Fred Black
Gene Ceragioli

Jane Chidester
Peter C. Ellena
R. B. Farris
Frank Green
H. C. Hall
Clarence and W. S. Horsley
Milson Kellison
Thurlo J. Ott
Nick Pappas
Arnold Sheen
Dr. Walter J. Walker
Dr. John J. Watson

We went ahead and, of course, naturally, went right back to Frank Green, and we spent hours together and traveled all over looking at various motels of the approximate type that we wanted to build, and came up with the basic design, and it ended up at a hundred and five rooms. It was three stories high with some parking underneath it and parking adjoining it. It was furnished by W. and J. Sloan of San Francisco, which is one of the finest furniture houses in the Bay Area. Their contract department did the furnishing. It was first class all the way through, and the hotel came out exceedingly well.

I hunted around for a manager and partially through the suggestion of Frank Green and several other people, I found a man by the name of Gil Pedroli. He had been working in Sacramento at the time, and he came up and we had a talk and he went to work and managed the Nugget Motor Lodge and has done an absolutely fantastic job all through these years and is still managing the Motor Lodge, Nugget Inn and Roof Garden Motel for John Ascuaga.

The addition of the Motor Lodge to the Nugget, of course, was a big boost because it gave us rooms right there and rooms for people that wanted to stay at the Nugget.

Before, we had no rooms at all. We had to rely entirely on the motels to get people to us.

The Motor Lodge took right off, and we ran a reasonably good occupancy all through the years. Incidentally, the cost per room came out to right around ten thousand dollars a room, which sounds real cheap today for a first-class hotel room like these were. I negotiated a loan with Nevada Bank of Commerce, which is now the Nevada National Bank. At that time, the chairman of the board of directors was Harvey Sewell. I went in and visited with Harvey. He was an oldtime Nevadan. And took him in the statement and the necessary papers to talk to him about a loan for the hotel and came away with a ten-year loan at six percent with no points, which was really quite a loan to be getting. Incidentally, we paid it off in somewhat less than the ten years. This was also done with no personal guarantee on my part, strictly on the signature of the corporation.

We found out we needed more rooms, and in 1963, added a fifth floor to the Motor Lodge, which [was] comprised of thirty-five new rooms. Also, this same year, directly kitty-corner from the Nugget Motor Lodge I built what we called the Shortstop Motel. This was a motel—more of a roomette idea. These were quite small rooms; we rented them for five dollars single, seven dollars double. And there were a hundred and seven of those. These have been modernized to a great extent and it's now being operated as the Nugget Inn and runs a very high occupancy. The rates, naturally, are up somewhat from what they were or what it was in those days, but it still is a—one of the best buys in the area.

The Nugget Motor Lodge was built of reinforced concrete; it's fireproof, earthquake resistant, and soundproof, and of course, was completely—completely air-conditioned.

The one thing that we did and one thing that I insisted on and Gil was very good in following through on, was on maintenance. We kept the motel in top-notch shape all the time. If the carpet had a burn in it, it was—either the burned hole was replaced with new carpet or a whole new carpet was put down. If the paint got scratched in the bathroom or in the room, the maid reported it; it was fixed the next day. We didn't let the rooms run down and get dingy-looking. Consequently today, and since John has taken it over, he has completely remodeled the whole Motor Lodge; today it's just as modern as anything in the whole RenoSparks area, and yet it was built in 1960, and that makes it eighteen years old today, so it isn't exactly a new motel. But it—you walk into the rooms, you'd swear you were in a brand-new hotel.

What about the pilferage rate that you experienced— was there much at this time?

Oh, around a hotel there's always some pilferage and there are people who bring an empty suitcase and take home a pillow. At the roomettes we've had rooms completely stripped. We've had TVs completely disassembled from the stand that they're on, and taken out. How they get 'em out of the buildings we never seem to know, but they disappear. It's not a big item, but it constantly exists.

What kind of insurance is there for this sort of thing?

Aw, you just self-insure yourself on it; it'd be too prohibitive to cover.

How about the restaurants, is there much pilferage from the restaurant operations?

Oh, naturally there's some; I don't know exactly what John's experiencing today. You always have some silverware stolen, and you have—you can't use too nice a salt-and-pepper shakers, or they'll disappear right away. I suppose there's even some of the china stolen. People always take anything that isn't nailed down.

I noticed from a recent visit at the Nugget, that the salt-and-pepper shakers are not too fancy; they're ordinary run-of-the-mill restaurant salt-and-pepper shakers. So, I think that that lesson has been well learned.

Yes, that's the reason for it. If you had—ofttimes I see a new restaurant open, and they'll have a real fancy pewter salt-and-pepper shaker, or real nice china imported from Italy type of salt-and-pepper shaker with hand-painted and all that, and I always make the joke that I'll guarantee you they won't be there very long. And sure enough, you come in three months later, and they've got no more fancy pepper shakers—they're gone. People walk right off with them.

It's rather interesting hearing your career unfold, that first you were into gaming, and then you gradually moved into food service, and then—now, at this point, you're into gaming, food service, and motel-hotel operation. You've kind of developed it in the reverse order from some people in the industry.

Well, I think this is because of lack of heavy financial ability. I didn't have the financial ability to build a million—two million-dollar hotel along with the casino to start out with, so I started out small and worked up to it.

What kind of competition did the Harolds Pony Express Lodge give you or what kind of help was it for the Nugget?

Oh, we got lots of customers from the Pony Express Lodge. In fact, at one time, the Nugget and Harolds had a bus that ran back and forth to Reno to Harolds Club from the Pony Express Lodge, and also made a stop at the Nugget. It was in cooperation with Harolds Club.

In Reno at this time, there was the Riverside Hotel, and the Mapes Hotel. Any others?

Well, there was the Holiday Hotel, too, at this period in time.

Now who designed the Holiday Hotel?

Well, we talked about that. Frank Green designed that.

Who were the financial backers of that hotel?

I believe it involved Norman Biltz, but I can't say for sure. Newt Crumley was the manager of it at the time and probably he had some money in it. I don't really know who it was. But I'm sure Biltz and some other people had financial interests in it.

That is your assessment of the Holiday Hotel? Since it's a Frank Green creation, I would think that you'd think rather highly of it. I know that dining room that overlooks the river is spectacular.

I haven't been in it for a good many years, but it's— it was always a nice operation and a well-designed plant, particularly, like you say, the dining room looking over the river. I don't know how well they've kept it up or how well they've modernized it. If they have, I would imagine it's still a very good—good operation.

When were the rooms above the Nugget constructed?

That was in 1963. I don't remember the day—the time of the year, but it was sometime in 1963. And that's the same year I built the roomettes across from the Motor Lodge.

So by the early sixties, the Nugget had how many rooms available?

Oh, around three hundred and fifty rooms at that period, all together, counting the ones on top of the new Nugget, which we—that story we haven't gotten into yet. Those were roomettes, the Motor Lodge and the roomettes across from the Motor Lodge.

Three hundred fifty rooms and about four or five times that parking.

Yeah, we always had plenty of parking.

Another point that you'd asked me about is the 1960 Winter Olympics. This was a very big thing for the entire Reno area. People came from all over and numerous people were in the area. Flora and I leased a home at Squaw Valley so that the whole family could go up there and enjoy as much of it as we could. We also leased another apartment where we set up a hospitality room so that customers of the Nugget and our friends could stop in, have a place to relax, have a drink or coffee or some other type of refreshments. We thoroughly enjoyed this and, it was a very interesting period.

Let's go back a bit. In 1957 we found that there was no way that people could call Reno or Sparks and get a reservation for a motel; there was no clearinghouse. In other words, a customer might have to make ten, fifteen calls on a busy weekend before he could find a room to stay in. So I came up with the idea of starting a service which we called the Motel Reservation Service. We contacted every motel in the Reno-Sparks area, and

any of them that wanted to participate in this program could do so. We installed special lines from Sacramento and San Francisco, so that people in San Francisco could dial the number and it would ring in Sparks. It was much similar to the 800 numbers now; however, this was long before that. These phones would be answered at the Nugget, and we had operators at them twentyfour hours a day. Motels would give us or allot us, I should say, so many rooms. Maybe the Ace Motel in downtown Reno would give us ten rooms; another motel might give us twenty rooms. We could automatically confirm these rooms anytime during the week. If the motel got full, then they would cancel out with us and we wouldn't have any rooms to make a reservation for them.

The people would call and generally, most of the time, they knew the particular motel they wanted. We would ask if they wanted to be in Reno or they wanted to be in Sparks; if they wanted to be in Reno, then we would list—give them a suggestion of five, six, seven motels that had rooms. They select one. If we could confirm immediately, we would. It was a tremendous service for the customer and also for the motels. Naturally, the motels were somewhat suspicious of the idea at first because they felt that we would use this system to push the Nugget Motor Lodge. In order to assure them that we were not going to do this, we put the motel reservation service on the ground floor just inside the entrance of the casino. This served two purposes: it let everybody that came to the casino see the motel reservation service in action, and they could pick up cards which they could put in their wallet with the numbers on it. It showed them how it worked, and they could talk to the operators right there. It also allowed the motels to come in and check on us to see how we were handling the reservations. They

could stand there and listen to the phone calls. We did one other thing—we taped all phone calls; so if there was a question later on raised by a motel that maybe we favored the ABC Motel over the XYZ Motel, we could go back and pick up the conversation and the motel could come in and listen to it. This didn't happen too often, but it did happen. And we ran it very fairly, very squarely, ran it four or five years.

It was quite an expensive operation because we had to man it, we had to advertise it. I see a little ad here which ran in the San Francisco and Sacramento papers. I'll read part of it. "Free Reno-Sparks motel reservations." It gives a phone number in San Francisco and one in Sacramento. "Free motel reservations for any motel of your choice or any motel in Reno-Sparks area. Quoted rates guaranteed. Twentyfour-hour service, instant confirmation." We had a RenoSparks telephone number, plus the other two. And, "By using this service, each adult in your party will receive one dollar in cash from the Nugget casino in Sparks." This, of course, was the only benefit that we got out of this service, and it cost the motels absolutely nothing.

About this time, also, driving in on U.S. 40, which is now I-50 west of Reno, where most of the traffic out of the Bay Area came into Reno from, I realized there was nothing but billboards to tell people where to go or what to do; there was no tourist information center in Reno, so I erected an A-frame building just west of Reno, five-six miles, and called it the Reno-Sparks tourist information center. This, too, was manned twenty-four hours a day, and tourists could stop and we had brochures for all the casinos, all the motels, anybody that wanted to leave things with us, this was there and available for the tourists to stop and pick up and get

information. The motel reservation service also had a phone line there where people could come into town and if they didn't know where to stay, they could check with the motel reservation service at that point and get their reservation instantly over the phone. This, too, was a great service. This was actually the forerunner of the present Reno-Sparks tourist information center that's in downtown Reno today. And also the motel reservation service was the definite forerunner of the present Chamber of Commerce service that they operate in the Bay Area, in particular, and operate very successfully.

In connection with this service was there a jitney service to bring people into the Nugget?

Oh, at one time we had a jitney service that ran between Reno and Sparks, operated for quite a long time. And of course there's the Reno-Sparks bus service which brings a lot of people back and forth. When I first started the Nugget, there were only one or two taxicabs in Sparks, and now you can go by the Nugget and there'll be fifteen or twenty lined up; this is moving people back and forth between Reno and Sparks.

At this time did you work out package deals with the bus operators, Greyhound or Golden Tours?

Yes, all during these years, we were bringing buses in, much the same as they are today, with package setups where they got refunds, some where they stayed overnight and got rooms at reduced rates, some where they got meals or showroom reservations, all kinds of different deals where you could promote people to come in and come up on the buses. That program we worked all

through these years. Of course, it's still being worked on a much larger scale by the Nugget today and by all casinos.

Who coordinated all of this for you? You obviously didn't have time to spend your full attention on this?

Well, it was always somebody in the organization. One particular fellow, it was Fred Davis. He, personally, or somebody in his department handled a lot of these bus programs and worked them up—worked the plan out and carried it through right to the point when they met the people when they came to the Nugget and passed out the free coupons and various things that they got. Fred did a fine job for us all through the years.

Now can you take me through that telephone system? I'm a customer in San Francisco, I pick up the phone, and I dial this number; it's a Nevada number, is that correct?

Right, it rang right at the motel reservation office at the entrance of the Nugget.

And do I ask that the charges be reversed?

No, no. It was just dial direct, just like a local call. You dial direct out of San Francisco. It rang in Sparks, and then you said that you'd like to come up and stay at the, oh, let's say, the girl would flip a roll deck file over to the Ace Motel and see that they had four double rooms left and two king-size, and you wanted a king, she could confirm that immediately.

She would then call that motel on another line?

No, no. She would confirm it immediately at that point, and then later on when she had

a chance, she'd phone the reservation in to the Ace Motor Lodge, we'll say, and then on the records at the MRS it would then show that we only had one king left. Maybe later on in the afternoon the Ace Motel would call and say, "We've sold that king; you still have four doubles you can sell."

So it was up to the motel or the hotel to always keep the service informed as to what was available?

That's right, yes. They—naturally they kept some rooms themselves; they gave us so many rooms; and then maybe they found out that they weren't selling as many rooms as they had and they'd call and release five more rooms to us.

Now going back almost twenty years, do you recall that any particular motel or hotel was especially popular, more so than the others?

No, I wasn't that enough involved in that particular division of the operation to remember that at this time. Naturally, I suppose that some of them were. The Holiday Hotel in downtown Reno participated, the Riverside participated; they all did. I think there were a few that didn't but there were very few that we didn't have listed. And they all liked the service very well. After all, we were renting rooms for them, boom, boom, boom; and it was a great service for the customer because on a—particularly on a busy weekend, he didn't have to make ten, fifteen phone calls to find a room. We knew how many rooms were open. Maybe he'd ask for two, three motels that he knew about, and they were all closed. And we'd say, "Well, we have the following hotels-motels that do have rooms," and we would list them. And he would pick one; we would never pick the motel for

the person. If he asked for the Nugget Motor Lodge, he got the Nugget Motor Lodge.

You mentioned the Holiday, the Riverside; the Napes was in operation then. But that just about exhausted the list of the highrise-hotel-type operations in the city, didn't it?

Yes, at that particular time. Most of it was motels, smaller motels.

At that time, twenty years ago, the motels pretty much were an east and west ribbon across the two cities, along U.S. 40, rather than now where you find those same motels still in existence in addition to those north and south along North and South Virginia.

Yes, that's very true.

The city really ran out very quickly to the south, didn't it?

Yes, there were a few small motels ran out on 395 south, not quite as many as there are now, but there were some.

Now how many billboards did you have to the east and especially to the west of the city for the Nugget or for this service?

I don't recall exactly the number of billboards that we had. We had half a dozen, maybe more than that between here and San Francisco, and of course, we had some directly in San Francisco, some in Sacramento. Some did definitely advertise just the Motel Reservation Service. Some advertised the food, some advertised the Nugget Motor Lodge.

Now how much business at that time came from Utah?

Well, *very* small percentage compared to what came out of the Bay Area. In fact, we didn't do too much advertising in Utah. We did some in Idaho, because we were all from Idaho. Incidentally, my brother Ed and my brother-in-law Vince Aguirre, who is since deceased, had a restaurant in Boise called the Royal. It was a very popular restaurant. And Frank Green designed them a room called the Gold Rush Room, which was using the same basic idea of the Round House, that has been so popular in the Nuggets with open exhibition cooking. We had an arrangement with the Royal whereby they could automatically confirm rooms at the Nugget Motor Lodge for anybody in Boise, and we advertised in Boise to that effect. Gil Pedroli would allow them so many rooms every day, and generally we'd get a phone call once a day from them with reservations of people that had called the Royal saying they wanted to stay at the Nugget Motor Lodge. This made a great service for the people of Boise, saved them a phone call; they could know immediately if they could get the room or not. And many times on busy weekends people would be desperate for a room in Sparks. And if they were particularly good friends of Vince or Ed's, why, we would take care of them even though to the general public most of the rooms were closed out, because there were always some rooms held back for old customers, good customers, and generally we'd be able to take care of whoever Vince or Ed wanted us to get a room for. We didn't give them anything for this service; we'd pay for all the costs on it, and it was kinda just a little something extra that they were doing for their customers in Boise.

What was done at the Reno airport?

In those early years, I don't believe we did anything. Later on, of course, John put a big display out there. Of course, all the casinos have a display now. The Nugget had the first one at the airport, incidentally.

This promotion, or I should say, public service thing that I did that was quite unusual—I ran the following ad in the Reno papers, and I'll read the ad; it was in the form of a letter from me and tells the story of what I want to discuss right now. It is headlined up at the top in big letters: "Someday I Hope I Can Do This." And said, "Dear folks, On a trip to Europe in 1950, Mrs. Graves and I arrived in Madrid, Spain, on January sixth. This is a church feast day, the Epiphany, or 'little Christmas.' It is the day the three wise men visited the infant Jesus, and therefore, a holiday in Spain." Incidentally, I'll add in here that the sixth of January is the day that everybody exchanges gifts in many European countries, rather than Christmas. "We found the town almost deserted that evening as we were walking around until we noticed a huge crowd gathered around the corner window of a large department store. We pushed our way into the crowd and saw a sight I have never forgotten—a nativity scene beautiful beyond description with fullyrobed, life-size figures. It was breathtaking, and I said to Mrs. Graves, "Someday I hope I will be able to do this." That someday is now. This year rather than decorating for Christmas, I have recreated for you what I saw in Spain eight years ago. This life-size nativity scene is located just outside the Nugget in Sparks for you and your family and friends to enjoy. Signed Dick Graves."

We had these figures made by the R. L. Grosh Company. This is the same company who made the huge figure of Last Chance Joe for us; they were a company in Los Angeles

who did sets and scenes for stage plays and theatrical productions of all types. These life-size characters were made out of papier-mache, clothed in robes, beautiful robes. Of course, they had the lambs, the infant Jesus, the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, the shepherds, the three kings. Then in our own shop we built the nativity building out of old wood. This was enclosed in glass. It was made so it could be knocked down and stored, and it was placed on a corner parking lot by the Nugget Motor Lodge and was used every year for quite a few years. Later on after I sold to John, he gave it to the Catholic church in Sparks, and they used it themselves for many years and maybe are still using it. But it was a nice public service, I think, too, that we did something that nobody had seen like this before because most nativity scenes are small, tiny things and very poorly done. This was exquisitely done and was really very beautiful.

I believe you used the picture of the scene on a personal Christmas card.

Yes. One year we took a photograph of it, probably it's the first year we used it, and it became our family Christmas card with our name and the four children's names.

At what point did the Nugget add its shop facilities, its in-house shop facilities?

Very shortly after I started in Sparks; I would say in 1956 or '57. I leased the corner—would be on, I believe on Tenth and B, from a Mr. Zundell who had a garage there. This was a space seventy-five feet by a hundred and forty, and we used it as a carpenter shop and a storage area. In fact, the carpenter shop is still there in the same place. John still uses it today, because naturally around the casino

there's an enormous amount of work to be done in a carpenter shop.

I might at this time go into some of the men that worked in the carpenter shop. Of course, first of all was Ole Severson, who, you'll remember, helped me set up the Nugget. And then we hired a man by the name of Jack Webb, and Jack was in charge of this shop. He had working with him a gentleman by the name of Bill Carter. Bill, at that time, must have been sixty-five, but he was a super craftsman, had been in cabinet work all his life. He had a big shop of his own at home with lathes and every type of tool you could think of. And from the very early days, we made our own "21" tables, Crap tables, bars, booths; everything that was needed on the interior of the casinos were made in this shop; we'd hire additional help as we needed it. Another man that was in the shop and is still there today, was a man by the name of Max Hodgens. He and Jack Webb are still working in the same capacity, still doing a tremendous job. Bill Carter died a few years back. We have at home a set of very intricate laminated lamp bases that he glued together and then turned on a lathe, and the employees gave them to us for Christmas. They're in our Carson house.

Did you have an upholstery capability in the shop?

Yes, somebody in the maintenance department always was a painter, took care of retouching things up and then of course, we always used Solari who did a top job, Solari painting contractors, Al and George Solari and also Bob Gisletta who worked under them. These were very fine and honorable people and always did a good job, a top-notch job. Their father, whose name was Camill Solari, was a real craftsman of the old school.

And when we remodeled the old house in Carson City, he personally came over and did a lot of the work and interior painting and fine grain work that he had to do to bring out some of the simulated woods in the house. He was one of the real old craftsmen. But I can't say enough for the Solari people; they—of course, they're still in business today. I wouldn't have anybody else do my work even today.

Now the parking lots that you had and developed down through the years, were those lots asphalted at first or were they just covered with gravel?

Oh, maybe right at the very first, they might've just been gravel, but as we acquired them, later on, we would asphalt them and mark them off into parking spaces. Parking was one of the biggest things that we had going for us at the Nugget. Of course, I've mentioned this before that because, number one, we had no parking meters in Sparks and plus the fact that we always had lots of parking. And even as we continued to build and use some of the parking up, we continued to buy more property, more parking. John has continued this to the point where he has adequate parking even today.

By the time you turned the operation over to John Ascuaga can you recall the number of parking places that you had?

Just as an off-hand guess I would say it was probably about fifteen hundred, but I don't just remember. And he's got way over that today. He must have parking for two thousand or twenty-five hundred cars and vans.

Now to bring the patrons from those parking lots, some of which are quite a ways out, you had a bus or a jitney service—

I never had that at that time; John has added it in the later years. As those parking lots got a little farther away from the Nugget, he naturally had to put that in. But I didn't have a jitney service at that time.

Where did the employees park?

We had a very strict system about the employees. They had a section of the parking area; and in the employees lounge and the payroll center and all that, there were signs and diagrams where the employees could and could not park. We had to fire, I suppose, half a dozen employees for disobeying this rule because no matter how much we'd stress that the employees should not take up the parking right in and around, close in to the Nugget, away from the customers, invariably they'd come in, drive in, take a space as close as they could get and walk in and go to work when they knew that they shouldn't be taking it. We patrolled this and policed it. And if they disobeyed this rule two or three times, they found they were out of work.

Where did Richard L. Graves park at that time?

Very naturally, I parked where the employees parked because I couldn't ask them to be parking away from the Nugget and then my taking up a space right in front of the Nugget, so I parked wherever they did.

How large was your security force at that time?

During those early years we had, I think, one or two—I think one man on each shift. It wasn't nearly as heavy as it is today.

You had no problems in the parking lots, people being robbed or—?

No, in those early days we had no problem at all. I understand that today John's got quite a little problem, and at the present time the parking lots are patrolled day and night. These, of course, are just changing times, just a little bit different than it was when we first started.

At this time did the Nugget have a large fleet of vehicles? I know today that in Sparks you'll always see a Nugget vehicle, a truck, an electric golf cart-type vehicle, an automobile with the Nugget sign on the door. When was your first Nugget vehicle purchased?

I think in all those early years we just used our own cars; the managers and department heads and all would use their own cars and turn in expense slips. Later on, of course, as he got larger, it naturally developed to the point where he had to have his own—had to have cars for various uses. But at the time that I sold to him, I don't believe that we had any vehicles. We might have had one truck maybe for the carpenter shop.

Now at this time you were dependent on city services for the collection of trash or was that contracted out to one of the refuse companies?

No, it was a regular refuse company.

Today John has a big trash compacter, which compacts the trash into a big truck that they can come and pick up on a trailer and take away. At one time we—early on when we built the new casino, we put in a incinerator and burned most of our burnable trash, cardboard cartons and all the paper goods; naturally, certain things couldn't be burned, but the biggest share of it was burned. This was done with a big gas furnace. That later on was done away with because of the Environmental Protection Agency, I imagine.

I forgot one vehicle that we did have during the time. In fact, I had it right after we opened the Nugget Motor Lodge. I had been in Taipei, Taiwan, and seen the rickshaws there, so I bought one and had it shipped home. It was a bicycle and could seat two or three people and had a folding hood that came up over in case it rained. And we had the college boys wear a coolie hat and a—sort of a coolie jacket and pants, and they would take people from the Nugget Motor Lodge to the Nugget and Vice versa. This was used for three or four years until the thing finally wore out. And it—being parked in front of the casino, it told people about the fact that there was a Nugget Motor Lodge. And people really enjoyed riding back and forth in it; they got a big laugh out of it.

I notice a picture that you have here on the coffee table. It's one where you're being hoisted up to a platform that Happy Bill was seated upon; and the other day out of curiosity I looked up the record, in the Guinness Book of Records for flagpole sitting, although they don't call it flagpole sitting, they call it pole sitting. The current record is three hundred and ninety-nine days, and it was set in San Jose, California from 1975 to July 4, 1976, the Bicentennial day. And I thought that you would like to have that bit of information.

I didn't know that. I'm surprised; that's a long time to sit up there.

The pole on which this record was established was a fifty-foot telegraph pole and it was—the enclosure atop it was described as a eight-by-eight-foot box in which the individual lived. And that's a long time, but it also—the book also mentioned that the all-time record was set back in 500 A.D., someplace in Syria, where Saint Simon the Younger lived out the latter

part of his life atop a column for the all-time record of forty-five years. And I don't think that that will ever be broken.

No, not in this day and age. Incidentally, this picture with this block and tackle arrangement was set up one day; they hauled me up to visit—I wanted to go up and visit Happy Bill Howard, and so they pulled me up with the block and tackle up to his little perch on top of the pole. And I said hello to him and visited a little bit and then came back down.

Another item that I've picked up here from the coffee table describes the Basque Bar in the Nugget, and maybe you can describe the little brochure that you had printed up and I imagine you gave out to the customers.

This brochure goes into a very brief story of the Basques, the fact that nobody really knows where the Basques came from, nobody knows where their language came from. Their language is entirely different than any other language known. It has no similarity whatsoever to French or Spanish. There are of course, Spanish Basques and French Basques, and that's because of the fact that the Pyrenees run through both countries, and their languages have taken up some—picked up some words from French and from Spanish. But still the language—actual origin of the language is still to this day not known, nor is the origin of the Basque race known.

In the Basque Bar we had a number of items. We had the coat of arms which is called—I mentioned this before—is “Zazpiak-Bat,” which means the seven are one. There were some felt murals that we had on display. Three everyday scenes of Basque life are illustrated in these intricately stitched felt

appliques. One is a Sunday morning after mass when the week's news is exchanged. Another is a tavern scene in which the men are playing the Basque card game, Mus. The third shows a bowling match, a traditional game of skill called Bolaka. There's an organillo—it's the music box of the Basque wandering minstrel whose folk melodies are so much a part of the village street scene. The wine skin zahakia—this is a goat skin turned inside out. The Basques long ago found that goat skin hair sealed with tar gave wine a good taste; it could also be carried on the shoulders. The txistu and tambour, the flute and the drum of the Basque country used in festivals and by the town crier, who so announces his coming before reading aloud from his newspaper. The cesta—this is the wicker racquet which gave rise to the popular South American betting game of jai-alai. The ball is caught in the cup and fired back at lightning speed to an opposing player. It's interesting to note that the MGM in Reno and Las Vegas has a Basque jai-alai.

"Jota costumes—the typical folk costumes of Basque dancers which are now becoming recognized in Europe for their original and distinctive nature." Incidentally, this brochure was illustrated by Craig Sheppard, a very famous western artist who was connected with the University of Nevada art department and just recently passed away.

There's a very handsome Basque coat of arms printed on parchment.

As I've said earlier, we had these printed up especially for the Basque festival, and were given as a souvenir. And I know that many of the people that had them, they were extremely glad to get them and took them home and of course framed them. These are rather hard to come by because for years the Basque coat of

arms or the Basque flag could not be shown or printed or owned even in the Basque country. This has recently been changed, but at that time they were almost impossible to get. And if you had one in the Basque country and the police found it, they would confiscate it, naturally.

Do you recall who did the artwork on this—it appears to be an eight-by-eleven piece of parchment?

No, I don't really know who did this artwork. I would think somebody working with Doyle-McKenna Advertising Agency that did our advertising.

Along in 1959, we were receiving more and more publicity all the time in the San Francisco area. An article appeared on May seventeenth in the "Dining Out" section of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "An Idaho Restaurateur Brought a Nevada Ghost Town to Life, by J. L. Pimsleur." I'll read the first few paragraphs here:

Three years ago, Sparks, Nevada was a dead bird, an old Southern Pacific railroad junction. It had died with dieselization. But by last week Sparks was one of the liveliest old ex-ghost towns in the West. Reason: a human whirlwind named Dick Graves had blown into town, taken over, and turned Sparks into Nevada's restaurant row. Big, lanky, six-foot, six inch Graves, born in Boise, Idaho, had started his career during high school in the circulation department of the local newspaper. On the side he sold slot machines to grocery stores, branched out into cigar stores, card parlors, pool halls and restaurants. Eventually he was

offered a circulation managership with the proviso that he get out of his “side operations.” But since his side business was netting him more than ten times his regular job, Graves was henceforth in the gambling business for good. And the business was good to him.

In 1953, the state of Idaho dealt him a dirty hand by declaring slot machines unconstitutional. But by that time one-armed bandits had made Graves a millionaire.

Then it goes on to how I came down to Nevada and built the new Nugget, put in three hundred slot machines giving an average payout of 93.5 percent return to the player. Tells about the various restaurants, the Round House, the Golden Rooster Room, where our University of Nevada students are waiters and serve Colonel Harlan Sanders’ superb Kentucky Fried Chicken, Prime Rib Room, Virginia Banquet Room, twenty-four hour coffee shop, et cetera. It goes on to also explain about the various promotions and things which we did. It tells incidentally, about—:

By far the most fascinating aspect of the whole fabulous operation is the incredibly efficient kitchen setup. Graves has installed what is without doubt the most modern equipment employed in any kitchen west of the Mississippi. For instance, there’s a new three-thousand-dollar Raytheon radar range which can boil a six-ounce glass of water in twenty-five seconds, yet leave the outside of the glass frosty cool, can cook hot dogs in two seconds and turn out a baked potato in a minute.

Now I’ll digress a minute. This is back in 1959, so this is almost twenty years ago and just the last year or so, microwave ovens, radar ranges as they were known in those days, are coming into their own, not only in the food service business, but in homes all over the country. We did put this radar range to a great deal of good use; it’s limited in what it can do in a kitchen, but it’s mainly used for heating things like sweet rolls, and oftentimes if fried chicken had been—come out of the fryer and it was a little bit on the cool side, we’d slip it into the radar range for thirty seconds and it would be just like it had just been cooked.

Another interesting thing that we had in the Nugget that I failed to mention was a big electronic orange juice squeezer which automatically squeezes fresh oranges in lieu of canned or frozen juices. This was quite a machine. You dump the oranges in it, they roll down, they were sliced, the orange juice was squeezed automatically, and we always served fresh orange juice. It’s interesting to note that John Ascuaga still today, while he doesn’t have this Rube Goldberg machine, he does serve freshly squeezed orange juice in all the restaurants. It ends up by saying,

Last Tuesday in Chicago Graves’ Nugget restaurant received the most coveted restaurant prize of them all, First Award in the National 1959 Food Service and Sanitation Contest annually sponsored by Institutions magazine, the most respectable trade publication in the field. Only last November in a blinding snowstorm Graves opened another restaurant across the street, lavish Polynesian place called, of course, Trader Dick’s. And what had modified Graves’ prodigious efforts in the restaurant

field? “Shucks,” he drawls, “I just like to eat.”

When did Trader Dick’s move from across the street in-house? At what—I know we’re jumping ahead several years, but when was that site abandoned?

I don’t know the exact date. I would say about three, four years ago.

I believe we’ve discussed this again, but in case we haven’t, many people tell me that, “Oh yes, Trader Dick’s, that used to be the site of an old automotive garage. That’s a myth, is it not?”

No, I don’t think that’s a myth. Years ago it was a garage.

But when I originally rented the space to put the Nugget in, there was a furniture store in the building. But I do understand there was a garage in there at some time.

And today, what occupies that space?

It’s been closed up for quite a few years now. I don’t know what’s going to happen to it. I’ve heard that there’s going to be a casino go in there.

What occupies or what used to be where the Nugget convention center is now located?

Well, that was a grocery store, Hanson’s grocery store. That was operating when we went in there and was a grocery store and then we made a deal with them and leased the space, or John did, I should say, and put the convention center in. That’s after I sold to John.

Sometime during the early part of 1959, I received a call from a man by the name of John Scarne. I had never met John before; of course, I had heard of him and read some of his books

on gambling, and I was quite surprised to hear from him. He was in the area, and he wanted to come out to the Nugget and talk to me about slot machines. So, he came out and spent quite a long time in and around the Nugget, and I worked with him and showed him the various types of machines that we operated and how the percentage was figured on various machines. The actual reel assemblies on—well, one particular machine he mentions in the article is “21 Bell” machine. He was doing this work in preparation for a book which was later published in 1961 called *Scarne’s Complete Guide to Gambling*. In the book he talks about the change that had taken place in the appearance of slot machines. First in the chapter on machines, he goes clear back into the original machines that were made by Charles Fay and then talks about Mills Novelty, and he comes down and he says,

My friend Dick Graves, who owns the Nugget in Sparks, Nevada, a casino in which a slot player gets as good a break as he’ll get anywhere, probably knows more about slots and their operation as any man alive. Dick’s slogan at the Nugget is: “You gotta send out winners to get players.” This is why most of his three hundred and fifty slot machines return to the player an average of ninety-three to ninety-four coins out of every one hundred played into them. That doesn’t mean it isn’t a handsomely paying proposition for Dick Graves.

He goes on and explains various things. He says,

The new machine recently built by Mr. Graves called the ’49er pays a jackpot in forty-nine ways. This gives

a player one chance in one hundred and sixty-three of hitting a jackpot. There are seven bars on both the first and second reels, and one bar on the third reel. A machine of this type can have a losing streak, so don't expect to find one in a small spot. It needs large volume of play to earn money.

This is a machine that we developed ourselves and was later copied all over the state. It got an enormous play and in turn naturally made a lot of money because it was a loose machine and got more play than a lot of the other machines in the house.

He talks about—in another paragraph,

Another innovation popular at the Nugget has been the aptly named “Frankenstein” machine. There are only a few such machines now in operation. It is made up of four nickel-in-the-slot machines, bolted together, and has only one handle placed between the two center machines. The player must insert four nickels, one into the slot of each machine. He hits the jackpot when he gets three bars in any position. This means that the bars which appear above the payline, below the payline, or on the payline, can be counted along with those on the payline. One bar on the payline, one above the payline, and one below would add up to a jackpot, or two above and one below, or any such combination on a single machine. Since four machines are working in tandem, you might also hit up to four jackpots simultaneously. The top awards on this four machine, twenty cents per

play deal, five hundred dollars for three jackpots; if you are real lucky and hit all jackpots on all four, Mr. Graves will personally reward you two thousand dollars in crisp, new hundred dollar bank notes. Sevens on the payline also pay off handsomely.

Incidentally, even though there are many new late-model machines in the present Nugget, they still keep this particular machine. It's been rebuilt probably forty times, the mechanisms have; they even later on added a power assist like power steering gives to the steering wheel of a car, they put a power assist on the handle because it was quite difficult to be pulling the four machines at once. So, it's been a very popular machine in the Nugget as well as in some other places that were built after we built this one.

Whereabouts in the present Nugget is this machine located?

Last I remember seeing it, it was close to the coffee shop, in that area.

Scarne also goes into the “21 Bell” machine, which at that time was very popular; and here he says,

If I were a slot player in a position to play any machine on the market today, I would select the “21 Bell” three-wheel nickel machine first used in Dick Graves' Nugget casino. This pays a jackpot in nineteen ways and permits the bell symbol on the first reel to pay off either as a bell or a bar. The payback to the player is 94 and 9/21 percent. The chances of hitting a jackpot are one in four hundred and twenty-one.

The “21 Bell” was an extremely popular machine; in the book he shows the symbols on each one of the three reels and goes into some detail on it.

He also sets up a whole section of the book showing how to figure the percentage on various slot machines. I won’t go into any further detail on that. He has a picture of the machines, of the Frankenstein machine. And he goes into some detail about the rhythm system, and tells about that it is very effective and there are lots of players—lots of people that use the so-called rhythm system all over the state.

Scarne also wanted to know all about Keno, so I turned him to Bob Busby, who is the manager of the Keno game at the Nugget at that time. Incidentally, Bob has been with the Nugget now twenty years, and he still is manager of the present Keno department for John Ascuaga. He starts out his chapter on racehorse Keno,

Racehorse Keno is played in most gambling establishments in Nevada, and I spent a month of my gambling survey visiting various Keno parlors and most of this chapter was written in a Keno parlor in Dick Graves’ Nugget in Sparks, Nevada.

He goes into lots of detail explaining Keno, various Keno tickets. He shows one twenty-five thousand dollar winner ticket that we had at the Nugget. A lot of different types of games that could be played, four-spot, five-spot, tenspot tickets, and it says the Nugget casino’s payout chart listing the bets permitted and the payout odds on each is reproduced here, and he shows all of these charts. Also has a picture of our Keno game showing the microfilm machine that we had. Each one

of the Keno tickets were microfilmed as a protection against any coercion between employees in the Keno department. He goes into great length in showing how to calculate the house percentage on Keno, gives the breakdown on a ten-spot ticket with all the mathematical equations and all, and all various types of tickets. This is all extremely complicated and a little too complicated to describe in this story.

Bob Busby worked many hours with John Scarne in giving him material for this chapter in his book. Scarne, I think most people know, helped open the gambling and was the advisor for the government for the gambling in Puerto Rico when it opened many years ago, and gambling has been rather stable in Puerto Rico all over the years. It’s very strictly controlled by the government.

I notice that the book has an inscription; would you read that for me please?

Well, this is the book that John sent me after it was published. It says, “To the top slot man in the business, Dick Graves. Best Wishes, John Scarne, November 15, 1961.”

Of the two forms of gaining, slot machines and Keno, which one gives the player the best break?

Slot machines. Slot machines today in most casinos, particularly in northern Nevada, retain six, seven, eight percent. Keno, I believe, today will hold a little over twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five percent, along in there. I don’t know exactly what—because various places have different types of tickets and different types of payout, but it’ll hold somewhere in that neighborhood.

What are your chances on Keno?

Well, there's a whole myriad of different types of tickets that you can write. One ticket might give a little more favorable percentage to the player than another ticket; however, it averages out to that twenty-three, twenty-four percent hold. It don't make any difference, really, in the long run what type of ticket you write, except that one might have a little more advantage over—a little more than the other.

Tell me about the percentages on the dollar machine.

The dollar machines as we know them today you mean or—?

Yes.

Well, there's a phenomenon going on right now all over the state of Nevada, dollar machines are getting a huge play. This is mainly because they have a payout as high as ninety-seven percent, most of them ninety-five percent. I've mentioned somewhere back in this story where back in about 1957 I had realized the possibility that dollar machines could become a big factor in slot machines and put in what I called "Dollar Machine Row" in the Nugget. This was in the old original Nugget and set the percentage up as high as a regular machine. What had happened in most casinos was that the dollar machines were maybe about eighty percent payback to the player, whereas maybe a nickel machine was ninety, ninety-one, ninety-two, ninety-three percent. We set the dollar machines up on the same percentage of payback as the nickel machines, and while we got a pretty good play on it, the time just didn't seem to be right; maybe the economic conditions weren't right to get the gigantic play that the dollar machines are getting today. Of course, they're really not dollar machines, they're three and five

dollar machines because they're multiple coin machines today. You can play one coin, two coins, or three coins, or some even up to five coins. Dollar machines are going to continue to get more and more play, and of course, the reason for this is because the player's getting a better break on it and he doesn't fully realize this; he doesn't know what the percentage is, he just knows that he's getting more money back. It all goes back again, I mentioned before that you can't fool the customer; "you gotta send out winners to get players," whether it be in the food or in the slot machines or at the bar, you've gotta give the customer a break or he isn't gonna come back.

Do your chances really go up when you put in three coins rather than one?

Most machines today are multiple coin machines, those that take up to five coins; you win a much bigger amount on five coins than you would on three coins. Therefore, on five coins the percentage of return to the player is higher than it would be on one coin or two coins. This is because they're getting a higher prize. This is done to get people to play five coins rather than three coins or two coins, so that I see there's some discussion in Atlantic City now that the machines are supposed to have a certain percentage of payout, but the percentage of payout on a five coin machine is less if you only play three coins than if you pay five coins. And so I don't know what they're going to do about that back there. There is no such law in Nevada.

The last time that I was in the Nugget, I went up to the change counter to turn a dollar bill into twenty nickels, and went over to a nickel machine, which is about my speed, and I proceeded to put one nickel in each time and I didn't get a payout on any of the twenty.

Well, I'm not acquainted at all with that particular machine. Again, it is designed to increase the number of coins that the customer plays; the machine is designed that way, to gradually make them, instead of a nickel player, they're a fifteen cent player. If you remember that you can't change the percentage—you can't—as other expenses in a gambling house goes up, it costs more—in other words it costs more to buy a new compressor, it costs more to buy new furniture, new carpets, things like that. All of those prices go up, wages go up, the cost of operation of a casino goes up, but you can't change the percentage of win because if you do, you kill the play. In a retail business, you simply raise prices to combat with higher operating costs. In a casino you can't do that, so the only way to overcome the higher operating cost, is to increase the volume of play. And so this is done by adding more dollar machines and less ten cent machines and adding multiple coin machines rather than single coin machines; in other words, what you're effectively doing is upgrading the player. You're doing a bigger volume of business; you have to keep your payout, your *percentage* of payout, the same in order to keep the player happy and continue to send out winners.

When was the day that the penny machine disappeared?

The penny machine hasn't completely disappeared yet. The Crystal Bay Club here in North Lake Tahoe has twelve penny machines right now, doing a gigantic business.

How about the Nugget, does the Nugget have penny machines?

I don't think we ever operated any penny machines at the Nugget, maybe a few right at the early start, but we haven't had them for years.

The maintenance cost on a machine must be staggering.

Yes, it is; it's very high and you've got to keep them in top-notch order; you have to know whether the machine's paying out properly, if there's anything wrong with it—it isn't overpaying or shorting the customer. Shorting the customer'd be just as bad as overpaying the customer. So the machines have to be checked regularly, and you have to have a big crew and a big shop, lots of equipment, lots of know-how.

How often was that checked to see that it was paying out as it should be? Was that on a daily basis?

Well, we emptied the machines every day. When I first came to Nevada, most of the casinos were taking the money out of the machines maybe once a week, and they were not checking them individually. They checked, or I should say counted, all the nickel machines together, all the dime machines; and they knew how much fifty dime machines made and a hundred and twenty nickel machines made, but they didn't know how much machine number forty-two made. My system which I had developed in Idaho, was to check each machine each day and know exactly how much money that machine made and what percentage it held. This still is being done at the Nugget in Sparks, and by ten o'clock in the morning, I had a sheet which listed every slot machine and how much money it took in, how much it paid out, how much money it made, and what the percentage of win was. The head slot man would check this list every day, and he would maybe mark twenty machines that should be checked because maybe they had been losing for two, three days in a row. This

way you could immediately get to a machine and find out what was happening. Maybe it was paying out six coins instead of five—the slides were loose or the slides were worn, something was happening or somebody had drilled a hole and was cheating the machine. There're all different kinds of ways of cheating machines. By the same token, we might find a machine that for some reason was holding more than it should, so we would check it. Well, maybe sometime when this machine had gotten into the shop, why, reels had been changed on it and actually instead of having a ninety-three percent return to the player, it was only seventy-five percent return to the player. So this machine was holding too much. Well, that's just as bad as it holding too little; in other words, you're cheating the customer which is not good. So, in effect, we knew every day the condition and the position of every slot machine in the house, and this is still being done in the Nugget today when they've got, I suppose, over two thousand slot machines. It is all done by computer today.

Now you mentioned slides; what do you mean by that?

On the older machines you had slides, which the coins dropped into a tube and the slide would kick out three coins or five coins or ten coins. Now they have a different type of a payout system, but the new payout system can go haywire just as much as the old one. So, consequently every machine should be checked—you have to know what each machine does every day. A machine might lose one day, two days in a row, but it shouldn't lose three, four days in a row; and if it does, then it has to be checked.

Now you mention drilling holes; how would that be done?

Oh well, [chuckling] there's a thousand different ways to cheat a slot machine, and after you've found the thousand, somebody'll find another five hundred. They drill holes— used to drill holes through the sides of the machine, reach in with a gimmick or a wire and be able to pull the machine without putting a coin in. They could drill holes in the front of the machine and reach in and stop the reels. There's hundreds and hundreds of different ways of doing this. Most of the machines over the years we learned different ways of protecting; we put drill-proof metal on the inside of the wooden case in all the vital areas, so that you couldn't go through it with a drill. They come in equipped with electric drills operated by batteries, carried in a small handbag, very high speed drills. Oh, there's thousands of ways to cheat a slot machine. And it's still going on.

How about magnets?

Yes, magnets, very definitely. They've got magnets so strong now that they can actually control the reels, I've been told; consequently then, they make the reels out of aluminum, so the magnet won't work against them. They had one deal that came out shortly after Bally machines came out with their new payout mechanism, which was the hopper system, and it had an electrical, what we called a sweeper circuit board which decided on how many coins was to be paid when the proper symbols came up on the reels. Somebody found out that the wall cleaning solution 409 was a conductor of electricity, and they would get a long tube, go up through the payout chute and spray 409 in it; this would short-circuit the machine, and it would empty the hopper of coins. This was overcome by putting some baffles in so that they couldn't go up through with the tube. These had to be put on every slot machine.

Numerous ways—they get keys to the backs of slot machines, keys so that they can actually open them up. In other words, some slot man working, who is dishonest—he makes a key, gives it to a friend, the friend comes in, he actually opens the machine, sets up the reels, and wins a jackpot. So, all different kinds of systems were devised to stop that. One was we put—where the machines were back to back, we fixed a bar that went around on the back of each slot machine so that you couldn't reach around and open the back of the machine; you had to turn the whole machine around, so it couldn't be opened up while it was in the playing position. Another system was—and they have this in the Nugget now; I set this one up quite a few years ago—that was that every machine had a second lock on it. It was an electrical lock operated from the inside of the machine, what we call a solenoid lock. If you just took the key and opened the door to the machine, you couldn't open it because the solenoid lock was locked on the inside. Therefore, say a set of twenty machines on a stand, the only way that you could get into them was to signal the change girl that you were going to open this particular stand of machines, and then you took a special key, turned a switch that was in the base of the stand of the machines, and this switch opened the solenoid locks on all twenty machines. Then you could open the door. So that if a stranger, cheater, got a key to the machines, it didn't do him any good because they were locked from the inside. This is the way they are at the Nugget today. Because you've got lots of employees and there's lots of ways to make keys, and there's lots of locksmiths that make keys for a certain price.

Were you ever called in by the Bally corporation to advise them on their machines?

No. I wouldn't say I was ever called in to advise them; I knew the Sally people very well and knew Bill O'Donnell very well. We'll get into that story a little later.

About the time that we received the *Institutions* magazine award, the first prize in their thirteenth annual food service contest, I received the following letter from W. E. Winikow, M.D., Washoe County Health Officer—it was addressed to me at the Nugget in Sparks, Nevada:

Dear Mr. Graves,

It is a great pleasure to inform you that following inspection by Mr. T. C. Olson, I received a report that in his opinion the Nugget is the cleanest food and drink establishment that he has inspected in Washoe County. The answer lies not so much in the excellent equipment and newness of the building, but in the fact that your overall general supervision of the food and drink areas is superb. We wish to commend you in doing a very great job.

This was, of course, quite a thing to get from the health department because they could be pretty picky, I'll tell you, when they came around to make their inspections. Another little sidelight along the same line: Wally White was with the health department for years and later on he was in charge of the Incline Village General Improvement District up here at Incline. But Wally used to—anytime he had people from out of town, he had carte blanche permission to take anybody he wanted to into the kitchen, and every time I turned around he had somebody he was taking through our kitchens to show them; these were other health officers from other areas and people that were visiting the health department. He used to like to come down and show them the Nugget kitchen,

because we did go all out to keep the kitchen as clean as was humanly possible.

How often did they make these inspections?

Well they—they come around—I don't know right now how often they do it. But they did it quite often; two or three times a year they'd drop in unbeknownst to you and go through the place. I think it's an excellent thing; we used to get kind of sick of it because sometimes some of their requests would seem just a little bit foolish, but I guess they all had a good purpose and naturally—I've been in lots of kitchens, and there's lots of reasons for having health inspections, I can tell you that.

What's the main thing that they look for?

Oh, for employees not wearing hair nets or having—keeping their hair covered when they're preparing food, and dirt in underneath the cabinets, and dirty refrigerators and dirty walk-in boxes, things like that in general.

Running a twenty-four-hour-a-day operation, isn't it rather difficult to keep the kitchens clean?

Yes, it is hard, but it certainly isn't impossible; we just had a system set up whereby we did it, that's all. And we kept them that way, and they're still kept that way. John's doing a fabulous job in following through on that. His kitchen today is immaculate.

Late in 1959 and early in 1960, I privately and personally made up my mind that I was going to sell the Nugget. was working long and—too long hours, and I knew I couldn't keep up that pace forever. I had a real good-going business, and I felt that it was time I did something about backing away from it. Selling a place of this type, of course, you don't do it overnight, and so I started figuring just

what and how I would do it. The Nugget was doing well enough so that it was—naturally anybody in the gaming business would be tickled to death to come in and buy it. I put out a few feelers here and there, and always the thing that entered into my backing away from some propositions that were presented to me was that I was concerned as to what would happen to the crew. You must remember that all of the managers and most of the people in top employment, plus a great many of the regular employees, the dealers and cooks and waitresses, had been with the Nugget a long time. I was scared that if I sold to some Las Vegas outfit, that they'd come in with their own crew and these people would be out of work. Naturally they'd all promise to keep the crew on, but they'd bring in their own people.

Another problem was that it's a cinch that you weren't going to get all cash for it; so if I sold to somebody, we'll say from Las Vegas or some other operator, they would come in and immediately change the format that I'd set up that really made the Nugget what it was and made it successful. And the first thing you know, why, there wouldn't be any business and they wouldn't be able to pay me off, and I'd be in bad shape.

So somewhere along the line I come up with the idea of why don't I sell to John Ascuaga. Well, I had—before ever discussing it with him I talked with my accountants. Incidentally, at that time that was Carlos Brown. Carlos Brown had been my CPA for quite a few years, was at that time, and had done a tremendous job for me. He was a very conscientious and excellent CPA. We worked up some proposals, figures; and first we had to figure out how John was going to be able to pay this off, and one thing led to another. And finally, why, the whole basic idea seemed to start to make sense because if I sold to John, I would, number one, hold the

crew together, and number two, I would stay on in an advisory capacity for a long enough time to be sure that the Nugget went on and operated in the same general format that I'd set up. Finally, somewhere along the line I went to John with the idea.

John, of course, had no money. He had some money saved, but not enough to certainly make a down payment on the Nugget. And, I came up with the idea of selling the Nugget to him, selling the stock in the corporation—this was in the operating company—with no money down. At first, my CPA, Carlos Brown, thought this was sort of a crazy idea, but when we got it down on paper and worked out the advantages of it, why, it started to make sense. John, of course, was very surprised. I had complete confidence in him because I'd known him from the time that he'd gotten out of school and went to work for me up in Idaho. I knew of his ability, I knew of his absolute honesty, I knew he wasn't afraid to work; so, it ended up that we came to an agreement. And I sold the operating company—this did not include the buildings or the land or anything—I sold the operating company to John for three million, seven hundred and seventy-five thousand, with no money down, with an agreement that I would stay on in a full-time capacity and on a gradually decreasing capacity over six, seven years to work with John and to be sure that—well, to get down to the nitty-gritty, to be sure that I got my money out of it. This was done in—actually the sale was completed in October 1, 1960.

John took it over. As I said, I stayed on; I kept my office right there. I worked on a full-time basis for several years. I got away every year on a trip or two, and it worked out almost exactly like we'd projected it, with the exception that John paid it off in—I think he ended up paying it off in seven years—

completely paid it off, where we had projected he'd pay it off in twelve years. This shows the kind of a job he did, and of course, the kind of a job that he's still doing. It oddly enough worked out exactly like Carl Brown and I had worked it out on paper. It held all those employees together and they're still there, most of them. And, John kept the same basic idea of the operation of the Nugget that "you gotta send out winners to get players," that you gotta give top quality food throughout the place. He continued a heavy advertising schedule. He went right on with plans that—at the time of the sale, plans were in the works for a big addition to the building, which I'll explain later; he went on with those plans. And—well, the end result today is that I sold out and I've been able to go on a lot of trips and enjoy myself, and John's been able to develop the Nugget into one of the finest operations in the whole state. Hundreds of times I've had people say to me, "Boy, what a great thing you did for John Ascuaga."

But my answer to them right away is, "Well, look at what a great thing John Ascuaga did for me!"

"Yeah., but you sold him that place with no money down; you've made him a multimillionaire."

I said, "No, that isn't true. Sure, he's been very successful and everything, but I got what I wanted, too. I got my freedom; I got away from working twenty-six hours a day, and I've been able to do an enormous amount of traveling and enjoy my family and my life."

I feel that if I'd have stayed in the Nugget that I wouldn't—I don't think that I'd be alive today. I've also seen so many people—poor old Raymond I. Smith, he stayed right in there till he died. Harold Smith, he sold out and then lost a lot of his money right off the bat. Lincoln Fitzgerald, who has the Fitzgerald's Nevada Club and Fitzgerald's Hotel, he's very

old today; he never goes anywhere, never enjoys anything—all he enjoys is working. Well, I just didn't want to—I didn't feel like that I wanted to spend the rest of my life in the Nugget. It was a *tremendously* hard decision for me to make, because I love the business, I like the carnival atmosphere of it, I enjoyed the people, I enjoyed the customers, I enjoyed the employees, I enjoyed the razzmatazz and the promotions that we did; it was all part of my life and to just say to myself, "I'm gonna back away from this," was not easy, believe me; it was very tough, it was hard to do. But, it's proved out to be the smartest thing that I ever did in my life, and I'm extremely happy for it. I'm very happy for John Ascuaga, that he's been able to go along and continue to make the Nugget the success that it is. It's great for me to go in there and see all of those old employees still there, people that have been there twenty, twenty-five years. And, so all in all it really accomplished what I set out to do, I guess— is to sell the place and then enjoy life a little bit.

You had the business rather than having the business have you.

Yes, I think you certainly can say that, because once you've got a thing going as well as that Nugget was going and all the romance that's attached to it, it's extremely hard to say, "I'm gonna sell this thing," and walk away from it.

That's an interesting description, "all of the romance." What do you mean by that?

Well, it's a romantic business, it's a carnival business, it's a happy business, it's an unusual—something's going on twenty-four hours a day. It isn't like running a hardware store or something like that. And of course, I had so many innovations that I had developed

and added to the operation of the Nugget and actually that were used in the Nugget, but not in lots of other casinos; it made it all the more romantic, all the more interesting. Maybe "romantic" isn't the right word; I may not be using it right, I don't know.

But you enjoyed yourself while you were there.

Oh, I loved it! I liked every minute of it, yes.

Now when you actually made this transfer to John Ascuaga, that was 1960—.

That's right.

You hadn't even reached age fifty; you were a young man.

No, I was forty-eight years old.

You were a young man to be (quote) "retired" (unquote).

Well, I wasn't retired by a long ways at that point because remember I stayed on for six, seven years with John. And during those first years, I worked just about as hard as I did—as I did before I sold. But gradually I decreased it down and broke it down to where I gradually was away from it altogether.

During those first few years, what was the relationship between you and John Ascuaga? Was it boss to boss? How would you describe that relationship?

John just gradually took over the reins. He didn't all of a sudden jump in and say, "I'm the new owner; now I'm gonna do this and I'm gonna do that." The place just went on smoothly and that's what kept it going and

that's what kept the crew there and that's what kept the same type of food being served, the same promotions, and the same feeling, the same format. We had an excellent relation [ship] all through the years.

Now around Reno, I have often heard it said that, "Well, you know why John Ascuaga has the Nugget today. He married into the family; there's a family relationship between Ascuaga and Graves." That is a myth then.

That is a complete and absolute myth, and I think some people still think so today. The reason for this is that John Ascuaga is Basque and my wife is Basque, and nobody could figure that I would make a sale with no money down, selling a business of this size and turning over all the money in the vault, all the money in the bank accounts, all the stock, merchandise, everything that we had in the place, over to him with no money down, betting completely on the come. It was a funny thing, the Internal Revenue questioned the sale, and they came in and one of the first things in the discussion was that—it turned out that the Internal Revenue was concerned about it because it was an inside deal; it wasn't an arms-length transaction because I had sold to my brother-in-law. Well, with that, myself and my attorney both climbed down the Internal Revenue man's throat and straightened him out real good. But they were under this impression, too; it was ridiculous. Oh, they spent a ton of money investigating that sale, and many people thought that I still owned a hidden interest in it, that it wasn't a sale at all, that it was some kind of a tax gimmick. There was lots of different thoughts on the matter and lots of discussion, mostly by people that didn't know what the hell they were talkin' about. Well, it was obvious that

they didn't know anything that they were talkin' about because the deal was a complete and absolute armslength deal in every way. And, I held a little over one percent interest in the Nugget for about—I think it was about seven years until John paid me completely off. The reason I held the one percent was in order to remain on the license so that if John Ascuaga, for instance, six months or two years after he sold to me, died, I'd be in a great position if I were not on the license because by that time he would have only paid me a small amount on the total amount. So I remained on the license for that length of time. Eventually he bought that one percent from me; it was all set up in the sale of what he would pay me for that one percent.

Now, was this one percent of the operating company?

Yes.

When you mention that you sold the operating company to him, what did that include and what didn't it include?

Well, it included all of the equipment that was in the Nugget; it didn't include the buildings or real estate or any of the parking lots or the Nugget Motor Lodge. The buildings were owned by four trusts that were set up for my four children. I owned the parking lots and I owned the majority stock in the Motor Lodge, and, those were later all sold to John, which we'll go into that a little bit later.

Was there ever any hope on your part that maybe one day your son Richard, Jr. would inherit the business?

Naturally that thought came up in the preplanning of this sale to John, but you have

to remember at this point, Rich was only nineteen. He was in school at that time. Had I wanted to hold the business for him to go into someday, then before I'd be in a position to turn it completely over to him, I'm looking at ten, twelve, thirteen years more in the business. I didn't feel that I wanted to do that; I didn't think it would be fair to me to do that. Then I didn't know whether he wanted to be in the business; he'd never expressed that he wanted to be in the business. At this point he didn't know what he wanted to do—he was in school. Rich, my son, has a discount liquor store across from the Nugget today. He's had it now for five years. He's done a real good job running it, makes a nice living out of it. He's very happily married, has a nice family—two girls, and he's happy running the liquor store. So I think that he's done all right, too.

Is that property that the store is in, is that rented from the Nugget?

It's rented from John Ascuaga personally; he owns that particular building. There was nothing in it when Rich come up with the idea of putting in a liquor store. It was sitting there vacant.

How was that idea arrived at?

For what?

For the liquor store.

Well—at that time liquor stores were quite popular and Rich was lookin' for something to do—. He went around, made a lot of studies of liquor stores around the country, over in California, and a number of other states, and checked a lot of liquor stores out in the Reno

and Las Vegas area and eventually decided to go into it. And he's done it all himself; I haven't helped him in any way at all in it. [That takes a special expertise—.]

You asked about Rich's expertise or that it takes a lot of expertise to ran a liquor store. That's certainly true. Rich has an excellent head on him. He had a good education he took hotel and restaurant work in school. He's a very good mathematician; he has almost a total recall memory, so he was pretty well fit to get into the business. As I've said before, when he decided to go into it, he went out and checked liquor stores all over the country, went in—he'd go into one, stay two, three days and visit with the people and learn everything that he could from them. [He] did this in California; he did it in—oh, quite a few places in California, two, three in Las Vegas. The discount liquor business in Nevada is a pretty tough business because they operate on extremely low percentage, and the biggest price, of course, of a bottle of liquor is some form of tax, federal tax, state tax, sales tax. So, in fact, he's almost a collector of taxes for the governments. But he has made a good success of it, and he's enlarging it now. And I think he's very happy and pleased at what he's doing.

This might be a good time to talk about your children again. When were they married?

The first child to become engaged was Mary Kay. Mary Kay had met George Fry III when she was going to Santa Clara. He was also a student there, a very fine young man, and they were engaged and finally got married on September 4, 1965 in Saint Thomas cathedral in Reno. The reception was in the new convention center of Sparks Nugget. This was a lovely wedding, and they've had a very,

very happy marriage. They have two boys, Christian Vincent, who is now eleven, and Matthew Richard, who is nine.

Let's see, the next girl to be married was Joanne. Joanne had been going with a young man by the name of Ken Coveney over in Santa Clara, but actually, they were living in Menlo Park at the time. Ken had some duty to do with the Army, and he was sent to Wildflecken, Germany. Joanne and he decided that they wanted to be married on March 9, 1968. Flora and I went over to the wedding—had a lovely wedding in the church. And they have two boys, Sean Arthur, who is nine, and Daniel Aaron, who is seven. Unfortunately, Ken and Joanne were divorced a few years ago and Joanne is now living in La Jolla, California with her two boys.

Rich, our son, married Mary Dunn. Mary had been a home economics teacher in Carson City. They were married on May eleventh of 1968 in Saint Teresa of Avila Church in Carson City and the reception was held at the convention room in the Carson City Nugget. They have two children, and the oldest is Rochelle Anne. She's nine years old, and Katherine Lea (we call her Katie)—she's five years old. They're living in Reno and have a very lovely home on Mark Twain street in Reno.

Judy pulled a little fancy one on us—she did just what I did to my folks—she slipped off to California with a young man she was going with and they were married in California on June 6, 1969. This young man's name was Stewart Buckingham. They have two children, Jason Lane, age six, and Patrick Erin, age three.

Felisa Bernaola, Flora's niece—this is the girl we call Beebe—Beebe married Sam Savini on February 16, 1959. They're now living in Reno. They're in the antique business. They

have five lovely children, Kim Marie, age nineteen, now going to the University of Nevada [Reno]; Jill Kathleen, age seventeen; Natalie Ann, age sixteen; Michael Dudley, age fifteen; and Victoria Kay, age nine. So we've got a very happy family; everybody's doing well, and we feel very blessed by God to have all our family still with us and all of them happy as they are.

Let's go back to John Ascuaga again and this ridiculous story that he's some relation of mine. Some of this may come from the fact that Flora's mother and father, Frank and Gabina Aguirre, who lived in Boise, were very good friends all their lives with John Ascuaga's mother and father. Flora knew John Ascuaga as a child; they'd come to Flora's folks' house, and Flora's folks'd go to their house in Caldwell. So maybe there's some connection there that people draw on to make this ridiculous conclusion, but I guarantee you there's no relationship of any kind between John Ascuaga and myself or my wife. So we'll try and dispel that myth forever at this point. [Chuckling] I don't suppose it ever will be; it certainly makes no difference, but it's kind of a ridiculous thing to keep cropping up.

At this point I'd like to bring something out. You know, it seems like all the time I've been telling this story, that I've been constantly saying "I"—I, I all the time. While it's true that I was the driving force behind the success of the Nuggets, it was really my crew, the men and women in every department throughout the Nugget, that really made all this success possible. I think that now it might be—that I should mention some of these people and give them the credit for making the Nuggets the great success that they were.

I'll go clear back to Idaho. I've mentioned Lee Winn, in Idaho and what a great friend and partner he was. All of the following also

worked for me in Idaho and came to Nevada with me. There was Ollie Balmer—Ollie was the manager at the Oregon Trail Cafe in Mountain Home in Idaho and was a floor manager in Carson City and later on in Sparks, a floor manager there also, and then for a while he managed Trader's after we opened it. Ollie was very capable, very loyal, honest, and is still with John Ascuaga as an assistant manager. Pete Carr started in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho as a slot machine mechanic and worked in the same capacity in Carson City, and then came to Sparks. And at some point he was moved up to floor manager. His loyalty and honesty were beyond reproach, and his ability both as a slot man and as a manager are absolutely tops. He is now general manager for John Ascuaga.

Gordon Elliott was another chap that was working in Idaho. While he didn't work for me, he worked for Jim Kelley up in Idaho. He came to work for us at the Sparks Nugget somewhere in the early years, I don't know just when—I'd say in '55, '56, along in there somewhere. He's been on graveyard shift—and this is one of the hardest shifts to fill—as floor manager for all these years; and he has done a superb job on this particular shift, which, as I said, is extremely hard to fill and where you get all the dingbats that are hangin' around that have had too much to drink and don't have enough sense to go home. He is still in the same capacity, the same shift, working for John. He likes the graveyard shift; he's learned to live with it and likes it, and he's a good—he's an excellent man for it because of his absolute integrity and honesty.

Frank Arastegui was from Idaho. He never worked for me up there. However, he's the present casino manager at the Nugget. He came to work during the first years that the Sparks Nugget was open. He has done a very excellent job for John. Incidentally, I talked

to Frank just yesterday and visited with him for a while; I hadn't seen him for quite a few months.

Then there's Gil Pedroli. Now Gil never worked in Idaho. I hired him early in 1960, and at that time (this was before the Nugget Motor Lodge was open), I placed him in charge of the MRS (Motel Reservation Service) until we opened the motel. He had been in the hotel business in Sacramento and was very experienced. It's a funny thing [chuckling], just the other day I was going through some things in my desk that had come out of my old office, and I ran across his portfolio that he had given me when I was interviewing him to be manager of the hotel. I had pinned a note to it of some memos that I had written. I said Gil looked like he would make an extremely good employee, that he'd had excellent experience, and it's my guess he'll be with us for many years. I stated what his starting salary was to be—five hundred a month; and true enough, he's been there all these years. He set up all the systems and controls for the Nugget Motor Lodge, did all of the hiring of the first crew, and he's been an absolutely excellent manager in every way all through the years. He's been able to keep all the costs right in line all over the years, through all these years. And another thing is that he is a super good housekeeper, keeping the hotel looking new even to this day. He is still the manager of the Nugget Motor Lodge for John.

I feel I must go back to Ole Severson, who is now deceased. Ole was invaluable to me. He was very reputable and conscientious and worked long and hard to make the Nugget the success that it was. Somewhere in this story I've mentioned Harold Pepple—Harold had the other master license for the operation of pin games and slot machines in Idaho. And then he also went down to Las Vegas and

was in the Westerner Club in which I had a small interest. After the Westerner Club closed in Las Vegas, Harold came to work at the Nugget and worked for me for a while, and then after John took over, John appointed him as general manager under him. He was loyal and dependable and could be relied on completely to do the job that you asked him to do. He was a personal friend of mine for many years, and Harold passed away several years ago. Incidentally, Harold's son, Harold, has been working for me as my accountant for—I don't know now, eight, nine years, I guess, and he's just like a chip off the old block; he's just as loyal and trustworthy as his father.

Another excellent man that we lost along the way was Dud Dillingham. Dud ran the Brunswick Cafe in Idaho and came into the Carson City Nugget as manager when it opened. Dud was extremely well liked by all the customers; he was always happy, always had a good story to tell anyone who would listen to him. But a funny thing, he was such a good man, such a well-liked person that it wasn't possible for him to be a good manager. He didn't have the ability to say no. This oftentimes happened. It eventually got so that I had to bring him in and talk to him and actually take the managership of the Carson Nugget away from him and put him back as assistant manager and in a job, actually, he was happier in. And then this straightened out the situation because people were running him instead of him running the Nugget.

I would also like to mention a man by the name of Herb Haun, who worked in the slot shop. Whenever I had a new problem with slots, I would immediately run to Herb, and he would solve it in one way or the other. This would be some problem in some new method of cheating the machines or some—maybe we wanted to develop a new type of machine. We developed—Herb helped develop most of

the new reel assemblies and most of the new machines that I developed over the years. I'd come up with the ideas and Herb'd do the mechanical work on them. Really, he was just indispensable in the early years of the Nugget. He died about ten years ago.

In the carpenter shop were Jack Webb and Bill Carter, and Max Hodgins. Jack has been in charge of the carpenter shop ever since I was there. He's been an invaluable employee; he is still in the same capacity for John Ascuaga. Max works right under Jack and is an excellent craftsman. A little earlier in the story I mentioned about Bill Carter. He was one of the finest cabinetmakers I have ever seen in my life. All of these men were very important and valuable because they built all the gaming tables, the slot stands, the bars, and did a thousand and one repair jobs, and did them all as if they were doing them for themselves.

My comptroller for many years at the Nugget was George Vucanovich. He was a very, very high character individual, very dependable and trustworthy, and I can say the same about Carlos Brown who was my CPA—I mentioned him a little earlier—until I sold to John, and he is still doing John's work. Ray Brown, no relation to Carlos, came with me when I sold to John and was an excellent accountant. He is now manager of Bally manufacturing company's office in Las Vegas, and oddly enough, George Vucanovich is manager of the Reno office.

My advertising and public relations work was first handled by Fred Davis. I think I mentioned earlier that Fred had been with KOLO. After we moved across the street, Fred went into just PR work, and Doyle and McKenna Advertising Agency handled all of my advertising and also a lot of the PR work for many, many years. Howard Doyle and Gene McKenna were fine to work with and

certainly produced a lot of excellent results. I'd come up with ideas and they'd refine them and get them into proper perspective for advertising either on TV or radio or in the newspapers.

I haven't mentioned Bud Van Erman. Bud came to work in 1955, I believe in the old Nugget, shortly after we opened, as bar manager. He ran an extremely tight ship, and his labor and liquor costs never varied from month to month. If they were up or down a quarter to a half a percent, he had a fit; and believe me, it got straightened out by the next month. The fact that he did a super fine job all the time is proved by the fact that he still is John Ascuaga's bar manager.

And then, of course, somebody else I have to mention, have been mentioning right along, but I'll mention him along with everybody else here is John Ascuaga. He was really one in a million. During all the years he was working for me, he worked almost as many hours as I did. He had a tremendous personality and was liked by everyone. He had a great capacity to remember names and knew everyone. You remember the story I told about Dud Dillingham; well, just the reverse was true with John Ascuaga. He was a extremely well-liked, outgoing person, and yet he had and does have the ability to say no. So he had the ability to manage a business along with still being the extremely friendly and well-liked person that he is.

What is that secret about saying no?

Well, some people just don't have the ability to say no. They don't know how to say no. When I say no, it isn't just in the context of saying no." It's in the broad context of making decisions, let's say, and making the right decisions and not being afraid to make a decision. Maybe it's being able to say yes as

much as it is being able to say no. Many people are like that; generally people that have a super personality are not very good at managing. I've often found this out.

John Ascuaga lived where at this time?

He had an apartment someplace; I can't just remember where. And then he also lived with Dr. Sheretz for quite a few years. Dr. Sheretz still practices medicine in Reno. John was married on June 15, 1958. This was not too long after we moved over into the new Nugget. He married a girl by the name of Rose Ardanz, who had been a registered nurse in Reno, a Basque girl, a very lovely girl. They have had a very happy, successful marriage. They have four children— two boys and two girls. One girl, Camille, and one boy, John, Jr., the oldest boy, are in college at this time. Then there is Michonne and Steven. So he's been blessed with a very lovely family. I mentioned before about how people talk about what a great thing I did, for John, but I always have to answer back what a great thing John did for me.

Interestingly enough, John Ascuaga is about the same age now as you were when you let go.

Yes, I think John is about fifty-two now, so maybe it's about time John started to think about doing something. But it was—we did have a good relationship all through the years. And going back to these employees that I've talked about, they are—I never remember a time that I asked any one of them to come back and work an extra shift or to work four hours extra or to do this or that which was out of the ordinary for me, when anyone of them ever growled or grumbled about it all; they just went right ahead and did it. That's why, of course, that they've done the fine job that they have, and I could never have ran

the Nugget without them, nor could John Ascuaga run the Nugget without them. You can't do it all yourself, and you have to have real top men. With any one of these people that I have mentioned, any one of them, you could walk off and leave the entire bankroll and take off for Timbuktu and come back in a year or two, and everything'd still be just perfect and going on; the bankroll'd still be there. There's just not too many people that you can say this for.

I think one long suit that I had that helped me throughout the years was my uncanny ability to pick good men. I people talk about what a great thing I did, for John, but I always have to answer back what a great thing John did for me.

Yes, I think John is about fifty-two now, so maybe it's about time John started to think about doing something. But it was—we did have a good relationship all through the years. And going back to these employees that I've talked about, they are—I never remember a time that I asked any one of them to come back and work an extra shift or to work four hours extra or to do this or that which was out of the ordinary for me, when anyone of them ever growled or grumbled about it all; they just went right ahead and did it. That's why, of course, that they've done the fine job that they have, and I could never have ran the Nugget without them, nor could John Ascuaga run the Nugget without them. You can't do it all yourself, and you have to have real top men. With any one of these people that I have mentioned, *any one* of them, you could walk off and leave the entire bankroll and take off for Timbuktu and come back in a year or two, and everything'd still be just perfect and going on; the bankroll'd still be there. There's just not too many people that you can say this for.

I think one long suit that I had that helped me throughout the years was my uncanny ability to pick good men. I made a few mistakes along the way, but not too many. Most of the men proved to be tremendously loyal and capable and honest and did a superb job all over the years. And we're talkin' now about fifteen, twenty years on all these people and some more than that, certainly more than that with John and Pete Carr and Ollie Balmer—they go into twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight years. This is a long time for people to stay on your team. And it's the reason, I guess, that I'm able to sit up here at Lake Tahoe and able to travel and do the things I like to do.

There are some more people that I should mention. For instance, there's three men in Keno who've been in there working for twenty years, a little over. There's Bart Bosco, Tony Macaluso, and Bob Capurro, all three real top men; they work under Bob Busby. John Sheehan is another tremendously capable and fine employee. John had had his early training in Montana in the gaming business up there in Bingo and some of the games that they operated in Montana. I don't remember where he was working when he went to work at the Nugget. I saw him yesterday afternoon when I was in the Nugget and visited with him; he's been a floor manager all these years, and like all the rest of them doin' a real top, tine job.

I'd like to mention Charlie Woodring. Charlie was chef for many years at the Nugget; he's now—operates a small liquor store down in Palm Springs, California. Charlie did a great job in operating the kitchen and particularly in helping us design the new kitchen in the Nugget when we moved into it in 1958. Howard Early's another twenty-year man; Howard's been taking care of the buffet at the Nugget ever since I started it, shortly after the new Nugget in 1958. He takes care of

this noontime buffet, does all the decorating, prepares the salads, the foods, and then stays and supervises the serving of the round of beef and seeing that the buffet table is kept looking good all the time. And this has to be one of the best and most beautiful buffets *anywhere*.

John Santini, who was in charge of Slots for years, is another excellent man. Then in the storeroom is Jack Zonnerveld. Jack's a Dutchman, a good, hard worker; he checks things in and out of that stockroom just like they were his own and just like he was paying for them. He's a great bird dog and watches over everything.

Then, of course, there's Bertha. She's been there now since 1961; that's seventeen years. She's a seventeen-year-old employee; she's done a good job, too. She works for one bale of hay and three bananas a day and doesn't belong to the musician's union—no wait a minute, I shouldn't say that; she was made an honorary member of the musician's union. But at least she doesn't give any back talk or anything.

Then I've mentioned Don Wai before, I think, somewhere along the line. Don has been with Trader's for about twenty years. Well, I guess ever since they opened. He now is the head chef at Trader's; he's a very personal friend of mine. Incidentally, he went with us in the motor coach home the year that we toured India. John let him go for six weeks, and he went along as our cook on that particular trip. I don't know what we would have done without him in India because we had to eat all of our meals on the coach except when we were in Bombay or New Delhi. There was just no other place to eat them.

Gloria James is a twenty-year—well, I guess maybe a little more than that, twenty-two or -three years employee. She works in the coffee shop; I think she's worked the

coffee shop counter all those years. All of her customers know her and she knows 'em all by their first name; she's done a fabulous, fabulous job in that capacity. Then there's Gloria Roberts who's a "21" dealer; I know she's been there over twenty years.

And of course, there's hundreds of other employees that have been there eight, ten, twelve years, maybe close up to the fifteen. Some of them, of course, that I don't even know now, but there's still lots and lots of more employees that I've missed naming here. If I've omitted anyone, I apologize; I certainly haven't done it on purpose. And, I give credit to all the employees that have made the Nugget possible for me and also possible for John Ascuaga to be the great success that it is. It just couldn't be done without these top people...

Who instituted the Wall of Fame in the Nugget?

I think John started that sometime after I sold to him.

Many of the people that you've mentioned are on that Wall of Fame.

Oh yes. That was a very good idea; I think that's an excellent deal and many people look at it and it means a lot. To the customer it means that these people are loyal, these people like the Nugget, these people have been here all these years. John started another excellent thing which torn comments I've heard has been extremely well accepted, and that's he gives a five-year pin, a ten-year pin, one for fifteen years and one for twenty years. These are gold pins with jewels of different types in them, and becoming more valuable and nicer pins as the years go on. And it's been very well accepted, and the people that

wear them, wear them very proudly. They're so happy when they get them; it's been an excellent employee relations gesture on John's part.

I noticed up until recently that many of the advertisements in the want ads for help from the Nugget featured an employee of long standing and a quote from them about how nice a place it was to work. Is this another innovation of John Ascuaga?

Yes, I haven't seen those ads myself. I guess I haven't been looking at the [laughing] "Help Wanted" columns lately, but if he's doing it that way, that's real good. That's getting—giving it that personal touch, and it's true that these employees are happy at the Nugget; they're very, very happy.

Sometime ago in our correspondence, I sent you a xerox copy of a page from the Nevada magazine about a recipe one of the bakery chefs worked on for you that had to do with Mexican bread. Do you recall that story?

Yes. This was a bread that I found in a little, small cafe in Mexico on one of our trips down there. And, the bread was particularly good because of the way it was made and the nice crust on it and the texture of it. I talked to the man in the restaurant—I should say my wife talked to him; she speaks some Spanish—and he told us how it was made. When I came back, I brought some of the bread home with me; of course, by that time it had dried out completely. But, Gene Berry—incidentally, I haven't mentioned Gene Berry, how come I forgot him? He was in charge of the bakery all those years. And Gene Berry took and started experimenting, using the—what little formula I had, and come up with this bread. It's made

in a long roll like a French bread, but yet it's cut before it is baked so that you can break it into a roll. And the way it is formed, the dough is sort of rolled over so it breaks at the—clear across the long way of this roll, and in raising, it creates a lot of crust. It became extremely popular. They first put it in the coffee shop; then they had to put it in the Round House; then they had to put it in the General Store. It's in all the restaurants now, and I don't know how much of it they bake a day. But it's a distinctive, excellent bread.

There is one bread that is particularly delicious at the Nugget, and this is served to the individual on a small wooden cutting board, and it's a round, semiround, sourdough bread, and it is especially, especially good. Is there a story about that?

Well, I don't know on that particular one. We used to serve a small loaf of bread in the Round House, both one of whole wheat and one of white, and the reason we had that was when I first came to Nevada, I kept hearing about the little loaves of bread that they served at the Nut Tree in—a restaurant that's just between Sacramento and San Francisco. So I kept hearing so much about it, I finally got in the car and drove over there one day, and got ahold of the restaurant manager and got the recipe out of him and came back and started makin' little loaves of bread, and they've been serving them ever since. I think this new sourdough bread—I haven't seen it myself, but I would imagine it's something that Gene or one of the head bakers (Gene is now one of the assistant restaurant managers)—but it would be something that one of the head bakers worked up or maybe it was an idea of John's, I don't know, to serve the sourdough. It's an excellent idea, though.

Incidentally they now have eighteen bakers at the Nugget.

We have gone down this list of employees that have made the Nugget what it is today and what it's always been. If you were beginning all over, what key employee, key position, would you hire first to assure your having a success?

The first thing I'd want to know is who's going to take care of my slot machines. It's developing that slot machines are making the most money in casinos today, in many casinos as much as the gaming. If you'll study the figures from Atlantic City, you can see that slot machines are making a huge return. Consequently, the man who takes care of the slot machines better be a real top man and know what he's doing, or an awful lot can go wrong.

And that individual at the Nugget today is who?

Well, I think John Santini is still overall head of the slot machines.- He's got some different title right now, but I think he's still the head slot man.

All right, the slot machine man would be number one; who would be number two?

The food man.

The chef?

No, no, the executive director of the food, who is Tony Lubbers at the present time in the Nugget. And I don't know—have I mentioned Tony Lubbers? I don't think so. Tony Lubbers came to work at the Nugget about fifteen years ago. He's a Dutchman; he'd worked on ships, he'd worked in some

places in California. Really, I think he's one of the best food managers that I know of. He's got a tremendous ability; he knows food inside out; he, gets along extremely well with employees—he gets the best out of the employee. He knows how food should look when it's presented; he knows how to handle banquets, he knows how to decorate a room for a big banquet; he's got a great ability at innovating and coming up with unusual ideas at decorating the room. He's just a real top man, one of the best that I've ever known. He never worked for me. John hired him after I'd sold out.

In many successful businesses, one looks and finds that on the switchboard there's a longtime, loyal employee. Is that true about the Nugget?

I don't know anybody on the switchboard right now, but there was a lady on the switchboard at the Nugget by the name of Casey. Now I'd have to go back and get her full name; she isn't there any more. Poor Casey weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds and was on a diet all the time I knew her. But she was a super pleasant person, always had a kind word for everybody and every person. Many customers knew her; she knew people herself, and she had a lot of trials and tribulations in her family, but that never seemed to bother her in her work. She was always extremely happy and pleasant and was an outstanding telephone operator for many, many years with the Nugget.. I haven't heard of Casey for quite a while. I don't think she's still there, and I don't really know what happened to her.

Among the employees, what percentage would you say represented a minority or an ethnic group?

That'd be impossible for me to say because I don't know. At the time that I ran the Nugget it was very small. We had some of every nationality in the Nugget—Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, if you want to call them minorities, and Blacks—but I don't know what the percentage is now; I have no way of knowing.

With Affirmative Action being so much in the news today, how has that affected the casino business in northern Nevada?

Well, this is just a little hard for me to answer because, again, I'm not close enough to that-situation to know. I did hear that John hired one man in his personnel department whose main job was to see that the proper number of minorities, the proper number of women, were tilling particular jobs.

At the time that I sold to John, which was in October of 1960, we had in the planning stage a big new addition for the Nugget. You remember the Nugget covered half of the block at that time; well, this addition was to actually double the floor space. It was mainly to give us a great deal more casino area and a theater-restaurant. We went ahead and went along with these plans and hired the architects by the names of Harada and Meu from San Francisco. This was a Japanese and a Chinese. They were an excellent team. Actually the construction was started in August of 1961. It was announced in August of '61, and it took almost a year to finish it. During the course of the construction, we came up with the idea at putting roomettes on the top of the Nugget, of the new addition. After all, we weren't using up any floor space, and so we developed a small room which rented for five dollars single and seven dollars double, with access to it by an elevator that went up

the outside of the building. Of course, John Ascuaga had already bought the Nugget, and it was in our agreement that the children's trusts which owned the building would go ahead and finish this new addition for John and lease it to him.

This gave John a great deal more space in the casino. John later added a place called John's Oyster Bar, and the Circus Room was finally opened on June 21, 1962. We'll go in a little later to the operation of the Circus Room. I don't have any figures on how many more machines they were able to add, but I think it was several hundred additional slot machines and, of course, probably doubled the size of the casino space. It was amazing doubling, really, the size of the Nugget. We just absorbed this new space as if it hardly hadn't been there. The showroom was a success right away, took right off, and the increase in business, of course, was enormous because they had all the additional games and all the additional machines. It was an extremely wise move, I felt. The roomettes ran month after month a hundred and four or five percent. There was lots of people that wouldn't stay in them at all because they were so small, but for many people they answered the purpose of— they just wanted a place to sleep. And many of the railroad employees that had to stay over days in Sparks would take the rooms for the day; then the maids would remake it and rent it again that night. This is why it ran over a hundred percent. John has since remodeled all these rooms and made them larger and much more comfortable and reddecorated them, and he still has a very high occupancy on the rooms on the top of the Nugget. I think there's a little over a hundred rooms on the roof of the Nugget now.

We had decided to call the showroom the Circus Room, so, while this was under

construction, why, I decided that I'd have to go someplace and get some ideas for maybe brochures and some ideas for decorating the place circuslike. For a number of years there used to be a very colorful character [who would] come into the Nugget each year. He was the advance man for Pollock Brothers Circus, and was generally around the Nugget. He stayed at the Nugget Motor Lodge; he was around the Nugget for a week or so. So, I had gotten to know him pretty well, and I had him in mind when I had to try and come up with some idea for methods of decorating the Circus Room. So I went back to Chicago to their headquarters, the Pollock Brothers headquarters. They had some things there, but they immediately told me where I should go was to the circus museum that was in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Baraboo had been the home of Ringling Brothers, and actually over a hundred circuses had started in Baraboo.

Ringling Brothers had moved their winter quarters to Sarasota, Florida, as had many of the other circuses, and they had given the old buildings to the state with the provision that the state turn them into a circus museum. I went out to that little small airport on Lake Michigan right in downtown Chicago and chartered a plane and flew up to Baraboo, which was a hundred and forty-some miles northeast of Chicago. The museum turned out to be just a fabulous place. They had numerous circus wagons, old calliopes—these are steam operated, sort of an organ affair that are used in circus parades and inside the start of the circus inside the tent. They had miniature circuses they had numerous old posters of old circuses, old circus gowns and uniforms, everything you could think of. I took many photos and got a lot of general good ideas for the decoration of the Circus Room. They had a small circus attached to the museum. The museum director told me

that this had been put in to sort of add some flavor to this museum itself and help draw crowds. So naturally I went to the circus. It was a little, small one-ring circus; they had an elephant act and half a dozen different acts. And the elephant was Bertha. So I came back after I had been to the circus and contacted the director again and asked him about the elephant act. And he said, well, the elephant was actually owned by a local man who was in the lumber business. This fella's name was Mr. Deppe, and he had bought the elephant just to help out the museum. So I asked the director if he thought that the act would be available, and he says, "Well, I don't know; I can call Mr. Deppe." He said, "He has a phone in his truck, and I'm sure he'd come right over."

So he got on the phone and called Mr. Deppe and he was over there in fifteen, twenty minutes. He was a great big man; he weighed about three hundred pounds. He came in and we visited, and I asked if the act might be available. And he said, well, he just had never thought of such a thing, but we might work it out. He didn't seem to be too enthused about it. So then out of the blue I said, "Would the elephant be for sale?"

He sort of leaned back in his chair and said, "Well, I've always said that I'd sell anything but my wife." So to make a long story short, he agreed to sell me the elephant at a price of eight thousand dollars. And it was decided that the trainer could come out to the Nugget a little later on after he'd closed his act at Baraboo and decide whether he wanted to come with the elephant and work for us at the Nugget.

At this point in time I had, only thought of using the elephant as promotion. It would be used in parades; it'd be used for charity drives, various things and probably occasionally in the show at the Nugget. I intended to open with it if we got it. But a funny thing—that night I called Flora and told her, number one,

she couldn't guess where I was, and number two, she couldn't guess what I just bought. And when she heard I'd bought an elephant [chuckling]— I said I was in Baraboo, Wisconsin, she really began to wonder whether I was all right. I also contacted John Ascuaga and told him what I'd done because, of course, at this time he owned the Nugget, and he went right along with the idea, thought it was a great idea, and that we'd make a decision after the trainer came out.

We drew up no contract with this Mr. Deppe; it was all word of mouth. And, in a month or so, the trainer—his name was Jenda Smaha; he came from a long line of circus families, and I believe he was Yugoslavian—he came to Sparks, and we (John and I) talked with him about coning with the elephant. Of course, the only way we wanted to buy the elephant was if Jenda came along because really neither John nor I or anyone else knew anything about handling an elephant! So, we struck up a deal with Jenda, and he agreed to come.

Now there was—at the time that I had discussed and made the agreements on the sale with Mr. Deppe, one thing that it hung on was the fact whether Jenda would come along, that if Jenda came along, that bound the deal, and also Mr. Deppe had agreed to keep the elephant in Baraboo until we needed him for the opening of the Circus Room, which of course was on June 21, '62. This involved quite a few months of time that Bertha was still back East. During this time Mr. Deppe had an offer for the elephant that was far in excess of what he had agreed to sell to us for, but he turned down this offer saying no, that he had made an agreement with me to buy the elephant and as far as he was concerned, that I had bought the elephant. And remember that we had no written agreement between ourselves, but his word was good and he went ahead and sold

us the elephant at far less money than he had been offered by somebody else.

As I said, we'd originally planned to use the elephant in charity drives and things like that. However, she was put in the first Circus Room show, and she has been in every show of the Circus Room since the opening in 1962. Bertha was sixteen when I bought her, so this makes her now about thirty-two or thirty-three years old. She was an immediate hit. Often she would go to Hollywood to do a show for the "Hollywood Palace" TV show. She'd also leave town for parades in San Francisco or Portland. We had a large truck that she was hauled around in. John found that if she was not going to be in the Circus Room show, it became necessary to put a large four-by-six-foot sign right at the entrance to the Circus Room explaining that Bertha would not be in the show, because people got into the show and if Bertha wasn't there, they were mad; they were extremely disappointed. Being able to keep one act in a show for all these years is really an unbelievable thing because an act, practically any kind of an act, never lasts in a show over two, three, four weeks. But here Bertha's been running for all these years, night after night after night. Some customers, people that I know personally, have seen the act maybe twenty, thirty times and still go there enjoying to see the circus act. When Bertha comes on, you can feel the enthusiasm of the crowd because there's a huge murmur goes on as she goes through her act, and she gets immediate spontaneous applause for the various acts that she does.

One of the best acts she does is on a stand, a turntable stand which is about three and a half feet high. She goes up on some steps and stands on this turntable, and there is just barely room for her four feet to cover the turntable. They have to be right close together

and even each one of her feet is hanging over the edge of the small platform. The turntable is turned on electrically and revolves, and then I should say before this is done, the elephant opens her mouth and there's a big wooden bar that has two ropes attached to it that she holds in her mouth. A girl comes out and places a foot in each ring that is attached to this bar that Bertha's holding in her mouth, and she does a sort of a split with her legs right straight out. Bertha then adjusts her feet on the turntable and stands on her front two legs with her hind feet clear up into the air; the turntable's turned on, and she makes a complete revolution doing this. At that time she was the only elephant in the world that was doing this act, because it's very scary for the elephant when she gets up on this little small stand to have this electric turntable start turning. She gets a huge applause for this act.

She plays the harmonica, the drum with her tail, and a cymbal machine with her foot. One act—an idea that I came up with for her that proved very successful—was building a large slot machine. This was something like the machines that we call the Big Bertha machines today, but it was built out of wood, had a slot machine mechanism in it with great big reels, lots of lights that flashed. And the slot machine's rolled out on the stage, Bertha walks over and pulls the handle, the reels turn, and they always stop on the three bars) the bell rings, the jackpot drops out, which is three bananas. Well, this is a great crowd pleaser, and Bertha grabs the bananas and eats them. It's really a sight to behold if the stagehands forget to load the machine with the bananas, because Bertha grabs the handle again and pulls the hell out of it, mad because she didn't get her bananas, and they have to get the machine off the stage immediately.

She walks the plank; she walks a great big drum; she does all kinds of various acts. One

act that I saw in the famous Swiss circus—Mrs. Graves and I saw it one year in Zurich. This is a one-ring circus. But they had an elephant in this circus which did a drunk act. This was fantastic. And so I brought the idea back to the trainer, told him what—how this worked and what it was. He went to work on Bertha and in a few months had her doing the drunk act. The way this works is, she comes out—they wheel a restaurant table out onto the stage, and then they have a little box for Bertha to sit on; she comes up, sits at the table. And they have a large bell like a school bell. Bertha rings the bell, the waitress comes out with some bread rolls, places them on the dish. Bertha eats them. The waitress walks off stage. She rings it again, and she brings out a carafe of wine. This is, of course, colored fruit juice of some kind. She pours this into a bowl, Bertha sucks it up, drinks it, grabs the bell, rings it again. The waitress comes out, pours more wine in the bowl, Bertha sucks this up with her trunk, rings the bell again, and gets a little more of the wine. And then they take away the table, and the wine bowl and all that. The music starts playing “How Drunk I Am.” Bertha walks around the stage in a wobbling, drunk dance. It's always been amazing to me how the trainer was able to train the elephant to do this. It turned out to be a good act.. I think they're still using it today, even—and I believe they've got Tina doing it now, the younger elephant.

Shortly after getting the elephant, Bertha was in the Nevada Day parade at Carson City. This is in the fall, and she's been in every parade since then in Carson City. However, in this particular one, Paul Laxalt had an open house over at his home after the parade, and we were invited over. So I invited Bertha to come along. Well, we had a lot of fun with Bertha, and when she saw the swimming pool at the Laxalts' house, she was in it in no

time at all. Well, this created a big sensation 'cause elephants love water. And, it was a funny thing—we had a lot of trouble getting her out, and Jenda was just furious because she wouldn't listen to him, and finally had to go get a loaf of bread and entice her out with a loaf of bread. Later on that same day, why, many of the people there, including Paul, Paul's wife, and some of our children, various people, all took a ride on Bertha. We had a lot of fun with her that day.

(Speaking of a loaf of bread, incidentally, if Bertha gets a cold—which naturally elephants can get, the same as anybody else—one way of treating 'em is to take a loaf of bread and soak it in brandy and give them the loaf of bread with the brandy.)

Jenda remained as trainer for quite a few years, and then decided to move on. And John found a new man by the name of C. J. Madison., C. J. had been with circuses all his life; he was a very distinguished-looking gentleman. He had worked with elephants all the time in the circuses, knew them very well. He was an excellent trainer; when he was dolled up in his tux and on stage, he looked like a bank director. Later on C. J. had a heart attack and passed on, and John hired a man by the name of Dave Hall.

Early on, John bought a small baby elephant directly from Thailand, and they started training this elephant. The elephant was not too good an elephant, not too good at training, a little stubborn, hard to train. So he bought a second one out of Thailand and sold the first small elephant. And they still have the second elephant called Tina.

A few years ago John decided to build a new home for Bertha, and the home cost exactly ten times what I paid for Bertha. This was a very fine barn, built to look like a circus building, has a small swimming pool for Bertha and Tina. It is beautifully

equipped, excellent heating system with fail-safe thermostats so that in the dead of winter, why, the heat can't accidentally go off without alarming the engineering department at the Nugget. [It] has an apartment above the barn for the trainer.. They' have a set of bleacher seats, and all during the school season, even during the summer, why, teachers bring children to watch Bertha go through a few little acts and maybe some training that they're doing or letting them take a swim, or also while they're giving the elephants a bath. The elephants get a complete bath every day and a scrub-down with soap, and it's fun to watch this because they thoroughly enjoy it and like it.

Bertha and Tina have—as I said, it's been unbelievable that she could keep this act on all these years. It still shows every night in the Circus Room. They use her constantly for the various types of charity drives and parades, et cetera. At one time it was funny—the editor of the Reno Newspapers issued an order that if there was another picture of Bertha run in the paper, whoever ran it and was responsible for putting it in, was going to lose his job, because I laughing] it just seemed like every time you turned around, Bertha was in the newspapers. Of course, that's been forgotten, and quite often now, why, she's in it. For instance, the Heart Association will have a doctor taking her pulse and. have a huge stethoscope listening to her heart, and this would be a publicity picture on a drive for the money for the Heart Association—things like that. So the elephant's been used in many, many ways, and it again proves what I've talked about earlier, that fate and luck and being in the right place at the right time plays such a big part in a person's life because if I hadn't gone back to Chicago, if I hadn't gone to Baraboo, Wisconsin, if I hadn't spontaneously come

up with the idea, “Was the elephant for sale?”—if I hadn’t had the guts to make a deal and buy the elephant, they wouldn’t have had this tremendous act through all these years. These things seem to have happened to me all through my life and have been part of the reason of the success that I’ve been, in this particular business.

A couple years ago Bertha developed arthritis, and John has had the best vets in the country flown in to take care of her. They have her on medication now and have cut down the amount of work that she does. The heavier work, more strenuous type of acts, are done by Tina now. Tina was actually born in Thailand in 1965, which makes her now thirteen years old. And she weighs approximately ten thousand pounds. She’ll reach her maturity at twenty years. Elephants have an expected growth rate of about four hundred pounds a year. They are fed a balanced diet of oat hay, a variety of vegetables and fruit and bread.

One thing I’ve forgotten to mention is how the stars at the Nugget enjoyed bringing Bertha various little treats. Red Skelton always brings something like marshmallows or jelly beans or something to give her and Tina. Some of the entertainers abhor having to follow the elephant act because it is really a tough act to follow. Liberace doesn’t care at all; he’s always got some treats for Tina and Bertha. Liberace opened one of his shows riding in on Bertha. And they all make wisecracks and jokes about it, but it’s become a big part of—really, a great big part of the Nugget.

What is the Life expectancy of an elephant?

Life expectancy of an elephant is about, I think, somewhere between—around fifty, fifty-five years.

When Bertha has to go to the big “elephant, ground,” what about a replacement?

Now, it’s a little difficult to get new elephants. In fact, you can’t get them out of Thailand any more because the United States government has placed elephants on the endangered species act, so that you can’t import them from Thailand. Consequently, this is creating a shortage of elephants in the United States. I don’t just know what will happen eventually on this situation, because sooner or later they’ll all be old elephants and no young elephants in the circus acts in the United States. I think the endangered species act in this respect is a little out of line because the few elephants that would be brought into the United States for circuses would amount to absolutely nothing for the elephants that exist in Thailand and India.

What’s the difference between those elephants and the elephants in Africa?

For some reason the African elephants are extremely difficult to train. And not only that, but they can be very dangerous; they might go along and be fine for years, and then all of a sudden they go berserk and cause trouble and kill a trainer or injure someone. It’s been found that Indian elephants are much easier to train; they’re more brilliant and, easier to work with.

You mentioned parades in Carson City and Reno and one in Portland—is that the Rose Parade?

Well, she’s been in the Rose Parade; she’s been in Shrine parades; she’s been in hundreds of parades all over the country.

At first, how did the elephant perform? Maybe I should ask the question, how has the elephant’s act changed down through the years?

Well, actually it hasn't changed. a great deal. She's always done the revolving-stand act; she does the walking-the-plank act, she walks the big drum, she—they added the drunk act, the slot machine act. They don't do all of these every night. They're added and changed around from different times. She does a little dance around the stage. At the end of each act, they have a sign which, is like the oldtype window shade; it's rolled up and it has a wire hook on the top of it. And, they can put various—let's say there's a convention of Shriners there, the Shrine group number so and so. Well, she pulls—picks up this sign that says, "Welcome Shriners to the Nugget." When Mary Kay, my oldest daughter, and George Fry were here for their announcement party, we had a party at the Carson house for them, and then we went to the Circus Room, and Bertha held up a sign with—saying, "Congratulations Kay and George" with little lovebirds flying all over the sign. This really took [laughing] Kay and George's breath away, and Flora and I got a big laugh out of it.

So, it's endless what can be done with this elephant. She's had her picture taken with George Burns; she's had her picture taken with all the different entertainers— Red Skelton, Liberace. They all love her, particularly that type of entertainer, because they see her value and they appreciate what she does because she's an entertainer just like they are.

Where was Bertha's first home?

Her first home was over in a building which was rented from the Southern Pacific Railroad; it was kind of an old barn or storage room that they'd had. And we sort of set up—well, it was a comfortable improvised place where she could stay, and they had water and wooden floor for her to stay on. And she's chained up, of course, at night, like they still

are. And she stayed in that for a long time until John built this new house for her.

How many offers has the Nugget received to sell either elephant?

Well, I think he's had quite a few different offers, feelers, of whether he would sell the elephant. I know of one where he was offered fifty thousand dollars for Bertha. This was from a man who deals in animal acts. She's worth far more than any fifty thousand to the Nugget. [Do Bertha and Tina have a union card?] [Laughing] I think the musicians union had a big deal one night and gave Bertha a membership in the local musicians union just as a gag. But she works pretty cheap; she works for a bale of hay and three bananas a day, so she's not too expensive, and I don't think her rate of pay has gone up in all the years she's been there.

We are now going to take up the travel phase of Richard L. Graves' oral history.

THE TRAVEL YEARS

Two particular part of the travels I'm going to discuss at this time are mainly connected with the motor coach home that I built and eventually traveled around the world in and visited thirty-eight countries. Along in 1961 or '62, Mrs. Graves and I arranged a trip. We were in Europe for a short while; then we came down and flew from Portugal over to Madeira, the Madeira Islands, and from there to the Canary Islands. We spent some time there and picked up a Union Castle Line ship that stopped off in the Canary Islands and was going on down to South Africa. The Canary Islands were extremely interesting and Madeira too; that's a lovely island. Then the Union Castle Line was a nice ship and we had a very pleasant journey down on it. On this particular trip, we met a priest who was going into South Africa on his first mission. His name was Father John Doyle. We used to have a few drinks before dinner with him, and then he generally ate dinner with us on the trip. We visited quite a bit, and we came to know him very well. And all through the years we've continued to keep in touch, and

I'll develop further how he's made several trips with us.

We Left the Union Castle cruise ship at Cape Town and then worked our way back up through Africa. We had never been to Africa before, so we were in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Kruger National Park, and over to Durban. Then we went back to Johannesburg and then flew from there back up to Nairobi. This is the first time that we'd been in Nairobi. We did the usual things that are done there; we went out to Treetop, to the Nairobi National Park which is just fifteen, twenty minutes from downtown Nairobi. It's a fabulous park with wild game living in their natural state. I have photographs of a whole pride of lions eating on a kill, a zebra which they'd killed that night. The females and the big male and all the little cubs—a Land Rover doesn't bother them. Of course, you don't dare get outside the Land Rover. And it was extremely fascinating to watch them eat and play and the little ones crawling over the male. The father, he'd cuff 'em with

his paw and send 'em flying and they'd come runnin' right back just like little kids, for more of it.

We went to the Mount Kenya Safari Club, did all of these things. And at that time I conceived the idea of what a fantastic thing it would be to see Africa from a motor coach home. Motor coach homes at this time were just starting to become somewhat popular; there were a few of them around, a smaller van-type one. And just before I'd left, I'd read a story about Ford, and Dodge were coming out with about a twenty-three or -four-foot motor coach, home. While I was in Nairobi, I was, of course, wondering whether it was possible to tour Africa in a motor coach home. My idea was to come back with our whole family, and actually tour Africa in a motor coach home. I went to the automobile association; I was directed to a man by the name of Gostling—Lance was his first name. He was an old British army officer, and I told him my story, and in a heavy British accent he was really almost insulted that I should ask him if such a trip was possible and could he arrange it. He said, "You tell me where you want to go, and I will make the arrangements." He was a super, efficient type of individual. He later became a very close friend of ours, and I'll go into some of the things he did for us later on.

Anyway, we came home, and I had this idea cooking in my mind, and I started getting information about the Ford and the Dodge motor coach homes. I went down to El Monte, California where they were making the Dodge, and went through the factory. I saw it; it was great. Somewhere along the line I heard of a larger motor coach home that was in Beverly Hills; this is sometime later after I first looked at the Ford—or the Dodge. So I flew to Beverly Hills and got ahold of this gentleman and asked him if I could see his

coach. I'd made arrangements before I went down. And he was very gracious and showed me the coach. Well, he had a coach which had been actually a Greyhound bus, and it had been converted by Custom Coach Company of Columbus, Ohio. Well, after I went through this motor coach home, I was immediately upgraded from the Ford or the Dodge.

So, I came back to Sparks, and this was now along in about '62 sometime, and contacted Custom Coach. I talked to a man by the name of Miles Elmers, who was the owner of the company. He told me that it just so happened that he was going to be delivering a coach into the San Francisco area, and he would make arrangements to come through Sparks and visit with me and I could see the coach. This was a brand-new job they'd done, and we could discuss it. So, he showed up with his coach and it was a beautiful piece of work, absolutely top-notch craftsmanship all the way through. So, naturally Miles wanted to go ahead and get a coach and build one for me. But I had the desire to do this myself. I had the facilities to do it, the general knowledge myself, plus I felt that I could put a crew together and have the fun of putting a coach together. I found out I could buy a used General Motors 4104 coach; this is a thirty-five-foot coach that had been owned by Jim Wood of Virginia and Truckee Transit and Gray Line Tours. He had one extra coach, one more than he needed, and this particular coach had had excellent care and had only ninety thousand miles on it, which is extremely low mileage for a used coach.

Miles Elmers tried to talk me out of the idea of building it myself and told me that he'd had numerous people try to do this, and it always ended up that Custom Coach had to come in and finish the job. I assured him I didn't think this would be the case in this situation, and we finally came to an

agreement. And he offered to sell me the plans and specifications and give me the source of supply for all the various components that had to go into the coach for four thousand dollars. While he was here, we actually set down and designed the coach. This had to be done especially for our family and for the type of trip that I had planned. He had never heard of anybody making a trip into Africa with a coach, so it had to be built to do this type of trip. We incorporated all these things in it, and he eventually sent the plans out to me.

Somewhere along the line I went back to the factory and spent some time with them talking with the men in the shop, and I set up a shop in a space adjacent to where Bertha's home was at that time over in this building that was leased from the Southern Pacific Railroad. I hired a young man that was a sheet metal worker to be the foreman on the job because there was a lot of sheet metal work in it. And we went to work and got all of the components ordered and built the coach. I practically lived with it, and we built it in four and a half months, which was record time to do this. We had to cut a side door into the coach because of the design and because Mr. Elmers insisted that a side door was extremely more practical than using the front door, the existing door of the coach, and this proved to be very true. The door went into the center of the coach. Well, to put this door in was a pretty big job because you were cutting right into the main framework of the construction of the bus, and so a lot of steel had to be added in to strengthen the whole framework, so you wouldn't get any twist or turn. And a new door was built and the door was put in; it worked extremely satisfactory. The front door was actually closed up; it could be opened, but it was locked from the inside with a big, heavy bolt.

The coach was complete in every way. It slept six inside. The seats—the front davenport made into a bed. The back of the davenport pulled out and made into a bunk bed; that was on the left side of the coach. On the right side of the coach was the dining table; that collapsed and dropped down, and the seats pulled together and made another very comfortable bed. This was a big wide bed for Rich. And remember that on this particular coach, we made the beds longer than Miles had ever made them because we were all pretty tall people, and we had to have long beds. Then the back compartment was for Flora and I, and had two large beds plus a great deal of wardrobe space. We lined all the cabinets, all the wardrobes inside, with red formica and outside with walnut formica. This was a beautiful job. Some of this was done in the Nugget carpenter shop.

There was a twelve and a half-kw [kilowatt] generator plus a two and a half-kw spare generator. This was just because of the area that we were going into. The diesel tank on the coach was 140 gallons. We had a 180-gallon water tank, fresh water tank, and a 180-gallon sump tank. I did quite a bit of research on being able to protect the water because of the area that we were going into, that was gonna be one of our major problems. And I found a unit which was designed for use on archeological sites; it was an ultraviolet water purifier. This was installed in the coach. This was an arrangement whereby two two-foot ultraviolet tubes were inside two-inch brass pipes. This was connected to the inlet of the water going into the water tank, so when you filled the water tank, you would turn the ultraviolet lights on and all the water that was going into the fresh water tank had to pass over, actually, four feet of ultraviolet tubes. This completely purified the water. As the water was drawn from the tanks into the

water system by a regular water pump, the water was also taken through a very fine filter which took out any sand or dirt or anything else that might happen to be in the water. So on all of the trips that we had on the coach, we never had any trouble with water. And this was saying something because we were in a lot of areas where the water is not good.

We, of course, had refrigerator and deep freeze. We had electric heating, air conditioning and electric cooking—very compact, small kitchen. We had lots of storage space under the davenport and in the under compartments of the coach, which is generally used for baggage in regular buses—is where the baggage goes. This is where the water tanks were put and the generator, and then there was some of that space left for storage.

We had to secure from the American Automobile Association a document which is called a “Came de Passage.” This is a document which has all the information pertaining to the coach, the model number, the serial number, the motor number, the weight; everything you could think of was on this Came, and there were about twenty pages which were all duplicates. The system used was that when you went into a country, they took one section of one page. They were perforated, and then they stamped the section that was left in the page showing the date that the coach entered that country—for instance entered Kenya. As you left the country, they took out the other section of that particular page and stamped the remaining stub that was in it showing that the coach had left Kenya. Then, the second page would be stamped by what was then Tanganyika. You entered Tanganyika, and then leaving Tanganyika you did the same thing. The reason for this was to be sure that the vehicle entered the country legally and was taken out of the country legally.

Naturally I had to do a lot of research on this particular trip because our first trip was to be Africa. Lance Gostling—I contacted him, then, gave him the basic itinerary that we wanted to make. He had to go to work and find places for us to stay. He had to check bridges because the coach weighed thirty-one thousand pounds. He had, to find safe places for us to stay; there were no camping places as such in Kenya. And I’ll tell you, he went to work and he did one unbelievable job in setting up this trip for us, not only in Kenya or in east Africa, I should say, but also on down the line. He had contacted the various automobile associations for us and gotten us maps of cities, maps of the countries, did everything that was possible to properly set up this trip. And he set it up in first-class manner.

Incidentally, I paid twenty-nine thousand dollars for the coach to Jim Wood, which was a very fair price. One interesting little sidelight that I’ll add right now is that everywhere we went with the coach, in all the thirty-eight countries that we visited, one of the first questions was that, “How much did this cost?”

And, I had a stock answer that I used to generally tell people. I said, “Well, when I went to build it, I told my accountant to keep good track of all the costs, all the parts, all the labor, and keep everything in good order, and I told him that if he ever told me the total, I’d fire him.” So they kinda got the drift that I wasn’t about to tell ’em what the coach cost. And actually I don’t know that I ever did know the total *exact* cost; I was almost afraid myself to find out what it cost. It cost plenty, but we got *unbelievable* use out of it. It was a fabulous thing.

The coach was shipped from Los Angeles in early part of 1964 with the timing so that it would get into Mombasa the latter part of June. And, the family flew there and met it. I forgot one thing in telling about the

construction of this coach. I happened to see an advertisement for an aluminum rig that was meant to go on top of a car, which was eight feet wide and twelve feet long and about—a little over a foot deep. This was hinged at the back end, and you could crank it up, and it had canvas sides and a zipper door and room for two beds inside it. Well, I thought this would be a great place for the driver and cook boy to sleep. So I bought one of these, made a framework to hold it on top of the coach, and put some fold-down steps on the back side of the coach where you could climb up, get on top of the coach, crank this “penthouse,” as we called it, up. It was hinged, as I said, on the front end of it, so that it opened up and you could walk right into it. And there was plenty of room for two beds, for their suitcases, and other things that they might have. So this was actually a separate little room for the driver and cook. When we got ready to travel, it was folded down; the canvas sides folded right in. It was completely waterproof, and turned out to be an extremely practical arrangement.

I had made arrangements with Miles Elmers, who by this time has turned out to be a tremendous person and very, very good friend of mine, to allow Jim Alsbaugh to go with us. Jim was a mechanic working for Custom Coach. I had become acquainted with him, and I needed somebody to drive the coach. I needed also on this particular trip, somebody that knew how to take care of it if something went wrong. Miles agreed to let Jim go on the trip, and we arranged a salary for him. And also we had a young man whose name was Susano Lopez. This is the young man that we brought from Mexico to work in our home in Idaho, and who later on moved to California. At this time he was working in the Elks Club at Palo Alto, California. The people at the Elks Club were good enough to

allow Susano to go with us on this first trip and on all the subsequent trips, until the last one; Jim and Susano made the trips with us. This was great because we all knew and liked Susano; he was a very super clean type of person, very pleasant to be around, a good cook, and willing to do anything. And Flora particularly liked him, got along extremely well with him. And he and Jim became part of our family, really.

Prior to shipping the coach to Africa we had made a shake-down trip for about two weeks to Mexico. Everything went well and we brought the coach back and made a few repairs and changes. We had had contour sheets made for all the beds. We found on this first trip that it was a big problem making up the beds. So we decided to do away with the sheets and use sleeping bags. This worked out very well and we used them on all the rest of the various trips.

So as I said, we flew to Nairobi. Jim went and flew to Mombasa and brought the coach up from Mombasa to Nairobi, and it was parked in the yard of a country club that Lance Gostling had arranged for us to stay in for a few days until we could get certain supplies together and likes of that. When we shipped the coach to Mombasa, we shipped enormous amounts of canned goods, canned meats, hams everything we could think of that we needed right in the coach at that time. The trip was started, of course, in Nairobi. First thing we did was went out to Nairobi National Park (this is right close to Nairobi; I mentioned this already). Then we started up north and went to the famous Treetop [Hotel]. This is where Queen Elizabeth went in a princess and came out a queen because her father died while she was at the Treetop place. This was quite an unusual spot. They had actually built a hotel high up into a group of big trees, and it was quite dramatically

done. You were met a mile or two away from Treetop, and an armed white hunter took you through the bush with a rifle over his shoulder guarding you from the wild animals into Treetop. And you climbed a ladder up to the top—up into the buildings, and you were assigned little small rooms. And the general arrangement was that you stayed overnight because they had a salt lick and a small water pool right out from the veranda or porch where you could sit, and the animals would come in at night for the salt and for the water and you could sit there and view them. It was quite a sight and I forget how many animals we saw, but we saw lots of wildebeest and zebra and hippos and rhinos come in. We stayed up quite late that night and watched it— they had big lights shining down on the area where they would come into.

One interesting thing, in the dining room table in this place, I've never seen it done before. They had like a child's train track running down the center of a great long table.. The guests all sat at one table, and the little sort of railroad cars with platforms on 'em would bring the food from the kitchen; the cook would put the dishes, the soup or the dish of meat or vegetable on one of these little carts and shove it down the railroad track, and, of course, the people would push it on along and help themselves as it went down. Then they'd shoot it back up to be refilled; it was quite an [chuckling] unusual little thing. Food was excellent and we had a very nice time there. It was great for the children.

We went on up to Mount Kenya Safari Club, which is at Nanyuki. And this is a gorgeous place, was owned by some Hollywood people. [William] Holden was one of them that was in it; there was also a man by the name of Ray Ryan that was connected with it. I don't know all the people, but it was supposed to be a membership arrangement. We drove the

coach in; we'd made prior arrangements, and they allowed us to park right in back of one of the big cottages that they had outside, and we rented one of the cottages. And part of the family stayed on the coach and part stayed in one of the cottages. They had beautiful cultured grounds. I shouldn't say, really, *cultured*; maybe the word *tailored* is better. Everything was just beautiful. Of course, labor was cheap; they had lots of Africans working there. And they had an enormous number of birds all over the grounds, huge cranes, lots and lots of peacocks, ducks, geese—you name it, it was there—the secretary bird, which is a very interesting bird to see, also the crested crane. You see them in Africa quite a bit, all various types of birds that are found in Kenya. They had a little small golf course with water pools. It was a *gorgeous* place.

One day Judy come running over to the cottage that Flora and I were in, and she's hollerin', "Daddy, Daddy, come here!"

I says, "What's the matter?"

She says, "You *gotta* see this." And I went out and here was an African man, had on a jumpsuit; and on the back of it, of this jumpsuit, was the word *Birdman*. And he was walking around with a bucket and rags picking up bird droppings and washing the grass with fresh water. That's how clean and beautiful they kept it. We stayed there one or two nights, I can't just remember.

And then we came back down from northern Kenya back into Nairobi and then proceeded over to go over into Uganda because we wanted to visit Murchison Falls. We left Nairobi and traveled up through Lake Naivasha, where we saw the beautiful sight of thousands and thousands of flamingos. You could get quite close to them, and then all of a sudden one would start flying, [and] they'd all fly. They'd be eight, nine hundred flamingos in the air circling, and they'd come back down

and land in a different part of the lake. It was a most unusual sight.

We drove on through over to Lake Victoria, down to Entebbe, and we stayed overnight in Kampala. Oh, one thing I've forgotten, on the way over we stayed overnight at Kericho. This is in the center of the tea plantations in Kenya, and the particular place that we stayed was on a thirty thousand-acre tea plantation. This is a lot of tea. They had a beautiful, small place they called the Tea Hotel, and Lance Gostling had made arrangements for us to park the coach there. When we came in, we were going to park it on one of the roadways near the hotel. And people came out to greet us, insisted that we drive right out onto the grass, grassy area, rather than stay on one of the roads. I warned them that the coach was going to sink in there. He said, well, it didn't make any difference; the rains and the way vegetation come back, it'd be back in condition in no time at all.

While we were there, an interesting thing happened. A young chap came out the morning that we were about to leave and several of the people from the hotel; they wanted to see the coach. So we took them through and showed them the coach, and one of the men was the chef. He gave me his name and said he was very anxious to come to America, and by this time he'd found out that I had something to do with a restaurant and casino, and I said, well, that I'd keep in touch with him and see what could be done. During all my time in business, you get thousands of requests like this and while I was quite impressed with this fella, I never really gave it too much thought. However, he continued to tell me that he would like to come to America, and I told him that I'd check on it and contact him after I got back. His name was Yves Lesquereux. He was Swiss; he had studied in Switzerland, and I was somewhat impressed

with him. They were very nice to us at this Tea Hotel; the manager gave us fresh bread to take with us and various other things and packages of tea and things like that.

We left the next day and drove on down to Entebbe and up to Kampala. We stayed in Kampala a couple days parking in front of a beautiful hotel there. From Kampala we drove northeast up to the town of Masindi. This was as far as we could go with the coach, and Gostling had even planned this down to the Nth degree. We had a place to park the coach with the local police department; we took our Land Rover and drove on up to Paraa Lodge which is on the Nile River. It flows into Lake Albert. Paraa Lodge is right on the Nile (the Nile at this point is probably fifteen hundred, two thousand feet wide), and we stayed overnight in little cottages. In the middle of the night Flora woke me up and motioned for me to be quiet and took me to the sliding doors of the cottage, and right outside was a huge hippopotamus eating the grass three feet from our little patio. So, I went next door and woke up the children, so that they could see this huge hippopotamus. They're almost like a mowing machine as they go along, with their great big mouths and teeth clippin' off the grass. We watched him for quite a long time, then went back to bed.

The next morning we took the famous launch trip up the river to view the falls. This, in my estimation, is one of the greatest trips in all of Africa, and it's a pity that today that Uganda is closed to tourists and has been for a number of years because of the antics of Idi Amin, the present ruler of Uganda. It makes it impossible to go into Uganda at all. The reason this trip is great is because you are on a large flat-bottom launch, and you mosey along very slowly and the animals—every type of animal comes down to the river to drink. So, you get a real close view of the animals. You might

see a herd of five to ten elephants all coming down to drink, bathing in the water; and they really don't seem to pay much attention to the launch that you're in. You work over toward them. We saw buffalo, we saw rhino, we saw all kinds of plains game and animals, the impala, the—well, everything that you could think of was somewhere along the river either eating or grazing, lots and lots of hippos, huge hippos. They'd be all around the launch at times, surface right near us and then dive. The greatest sight, though, was a little farther up the river, close to the Murchison Falls—was what is considered the largest concentration of crocodiles in the world, hundreds and hundreds of them on the sandbars sunning themselves, stacked up almost like cord wood, one laying on top of the other. They'd hear the launch come along and one of 'em'd get a little scared and pretty soon they'd all slither off into the water. It was an unbelievable sight and something that none of us ever forgot. Then, of course, the Murchison Falls itself is one of the great sights of the world. The Nile River, which is probably two thousand feet wide—and I have seen this from the air on a, later trip—it's a very wide river, and then it narrows down, comes through a rock cleft only twenty feet wide. And then it plunges down in foaming and roaring cascades to a gigantic river pool a hundred and sixty feet below. It is, as I said, one of the great sights of the world, and we sat and watched it for a long, long time.

Then, of course, the Nile River that actually flows on down clear through into Egypt has its beginning in the Ruwenzori Mountains, which [are] over in what used to be the Congo and now is Zaire. And there are a number of different Nile rivers in this area. There's the Victoria Nile, the Blue Nile, and the White Nile. Actually, the Nile—the particular Nile river that flows over

Murchison Falls is the Victoria Nile. One interesting thing, surrounding this Murchison Falls, this general area, is a park, a game reserve called Murchison Falls National park. On two later trips, one in 1965 when I went hunting in Africa with Jim, Lathrop, and again in '66 when I went hunting with Fred Black, we flew from Nairobi over to Paraa Lodge so that we could make this trip and that both Jim and Fred could see that tremendous sight on the Nile River and see Murchison Falls.

On one of these trips we took with us from Nairobi the son of a man who had taken us (the family) on a safari. This man was Boyce Roberts, and his son's name was Alick. Alick had never been to Murchison Falls, so I met him in Nairobi and suggested he fly over with us. While we were at Paraa Lodge, he heard that a friend of his had a cropping contract with the Uganda government, the Uganda game department, to remove a large number of elephants and hippopotamus from the Murchison Falls National Park. What was happening was that the herds had grown so big that they were killing all the trees in the park; they were eating the bark off the trees. We went over and visited this man. I can't remember his name—his first name was Ian; he was from South Africa. He had a crew and he had a contract with the government to kill fifteen hundred elephants and a thousand hippopotamus. What they would do, they would make their kills only when they had a guarantee that they could sell the meat to African traders who would take it out and sell it in the villages. They had a huge arrangement set up to smoke this meat. The day we got there they had killed seventeen elephants. They'd go in and shoot a whole herd out, bulls, calves, everything, wipe the herd out, strip the meat, save the ivory (the government gets the ivory, of course), and the meat is then taken back to this camp and they had these arrangements to

smoke it in great big chunks. And of course by smoking it, it would be cured and traders would come in, buy the meat, take it out, and sell it to the natives. Incidentally, they asked us to have lunch, and we had a marvelous stew, beet stew (which I thought it was), and later on he told us it was tenderloin of hippo— was very delicious.

They do the same thing with the hippo; they'd kill off as many as they can [in] an evening. They have to go out at night, shoot them when they're out of the water, naturally, or they'd lose them in the water, and take the meat and smoke it, and cure it, then sell it to the natives. You could see the damage that the elephants and hippos had done to their grazing lands all through the park, and it was really quite a sight to see this—see them cutting up all of these elephants and hanging these great slabs of meat over a huge trough fifty, sixty feet long, where they had wood burning. And then they had racks above it to lay the meat on, racks made out of willows, heavy willows.

What type of wood was used for the smoking?

Oh gee, I don't know, some type of a mountain mahogany type of wood. I suppose something that was hard, would burn slowly and create lots of smoke and heat. The meat didn't look very inviting to me, but I guess it was great for the natives.

So we came back down to Masindi, picked up our coach, and stayed overnight again at Kampala. And, I have forgotten one thing that was very interesting on our way into Uganda. I'll have to go back and tell you that story. We were still in Kenya driving along on a very narrow unpaved dirt road that had quite a crown to it; there'd been a heavy rain the night before. A truck come along and the truck wouldn't budge an inch, and Jim had to

move clear over to the left because, remember in Africa you drive on the left-hand side just like you do in England. He had to get over so far that the rear end of the coach (this is, of course, where the motor is— the heaviest part) slid down into a deep barrow pit, and we were stuck and I mean *stuck*. The truck went on, paid no attention to us. Of course, we had the Land Rover. At this particular time we didn't tow the Land Rover; one of us drove it all the time. Either Rich or I or somebody in the family would drive the Land Rover along behind the coach. Well, immediately somebody said, "Well, the Land Rover'll pull it out." Well, there was no sense in attempting it because it was stuck so hard, the Land Rover didn't have a chance.

So all of a sudden we realized that we were very close to the Uganda border because we could see the border ahead of us, and the pavement started right at the border. The road was paved from then on, and lo and behold, right across the border there was a bunch of road equipment and among it, a huge Caterpillar tractor. As happens in practically anyplace you stop in Africa, a crowd gathers; they just seem to come out of the bushes from nowhere, and we had forty, fifty people around us, standing around watching our plight with this big vehicle stuck in the mud. So we talked to them and asked if anybody knew who owned the Caterpillar tractor, and it turned out that the driver was one of the crowd standing there watching us. So we talked to him. And he spoke enough English so that we could get ourselves understood, and he said yes, he'd go up and get the tractor and hook it on and pull us out. This he did. We had heavy chains with us, and he just took it out with no problem at all. We tried to pay him; he absolutely refused to accept anything, so we gave him a bunch of souvenir things that we had—lighters and pens with

the name of the coach on it. (I don't think I've mentioned anywhere up to now what we named the coach. We named the coach RIKAJUJO. And this name was derived from the first two letters of our four children's first names: Richard, Kay, Judy, and Joanne. This name created a lot of interest. I had big brass letters made for it that went across the front of the coach, and nobody could figure out what it meant. This really drove 'em up a wall. Of course, we always had a lot of fun explaining to them what it was.) But this was really just—this is the only tractor we ever saw on the whole trip, and yet here it was three hundred yards from where we were stuck. There's no way that even a big truck could have pulled us out, and I don't think we wasted an hour all the time. It was just [an] unbelievable streak of luck.

So we came on back down to Nairobi and stayed at the country club, then, again for a couple of days. And Lance Gostling had made all arrangements for a two-week safari, hunting safari. I had asked him to try and find someplace where we could go on safari and actually take the coach in and stay in the coach—part of us stay in the coach, part of us would stay in tents. He picked out an area which was called the Magadi Road. This was down southwest of Nairobi. There were supposed to be lion and leopard in this area. They had gone in ahead and cut the bushes and trees so that on the narrow track road, it was wide enough for the coach to get through. All of these arrangements had been made by Gostling, and he actually came and stayed with us on this particular part of the trip.

I have forgotten to mention one interesting fact here. You remember I mentioned on our trip from the Canary Islands down to Cape Town that we met a priest by the name of Father Doyle. When we were planning this trip, I had written Father telling him what

we were going to do, that I'd built this coach, and we were gonna bring the whole family and that I had a Land Rover, and that when we got down to South Africa I would try and visit him. He wrote back and said it just so happened that at the time that we were going to be in Nairobi was the approximate time that he had a vacation coming; he just loved to sleep in Land foyers, and was just wondering why he didn't come along. Well, this was the farthest thing from my mind, but I thought it was a great idea, and we did rig up the Land Rover (this was before we left home) so that the seats did fold down into a bed, and we had a sleeping bag for Father Doyle, and he actually went on the hunting safari with us. He also went up into Treetop and the Mount Kenya Safari Club. But lie was with us the full two weeks on the hunt in the Dagadi Road area.

The hunter that Lance Gostling had found for us was a man by the name of [Boyce] Roberts. He'd been a white hunter for years. He had a big farm, ranch, out of Nanyuki and was a very, very fine gentleman. And he had arranged this hunt in absolute, first-class style. We had, of course, our big supply tent; we had a big dining room tent, and everything that went with it. We had our skimmers, our trackers; these were people that had been with Boyce for a long time. His son came along because his son was at this point just training to become a hunter. This was Alick that I mentioned earlier having gone over to Paraa Lodge with us.

We had an excellent safari. We shot quite a few different plains game animals. I decided to try for a lion, and Rich was trying for a leopard. I didn't get my lion, but Rich did get a leopard, and he had a great experience in finding where the leopard was staying, and building a blind to go into, setting up the bait for the leopards. Setting up the bait, you'd

take maybe a hindquarter of a zebra or some other animal that had been shot earlier that day and tie it hanging from a tree just up so that the leopard would have to stand up to reach the bait. Then the blind was built maybe a hundred yards from this area. You cut all kinds of bush and branches; it was quite a procedure. And, you had a small, very small hole four or five inches in diameter that you could shoot through. What was done, you went in extremely early in the morning in the dark and you marked your path to the blind by tying toilet paper to the trees along the pathway in, because you couldn't use any light or anything to come in, and you could see the toilet paper and follow your way into the blind while it was still dark (maybe this would be an hour before daylight). So you would get into the blind, sit absolutely still and wait for the leopard to come. The first morning the leopard didn't come; the second morning he did, and Rich shot him and got his leopard. It was a great thrill for him, and I was very happy to see him get it. I had no luck getting a lion, but all in all we had the great experience of hunting.

And Boyce had made arrangements to pick up a local Masai. We were in country where the Masai tribe lived, and he picked up one of the leaders of the Masai, one of the elders, who knew the country very, very well. And he came and stayed right in camp with us. This was to help us in finding our way around through the bush and perhaps trying to locate game for us because he'd lived in the country all his life and knew it inside out. His name was Tema, and he was tall, very stately looking. He had a tremendous scar on his leg, ran from almost his hip clear down the whole length of his leg, where he'd been clawed by a lion that he had killed with a spear and went in to get and the lion wasn't finished out quite enough and came after him. Of course, this

must have been terribly painful because it was sure some awful scar.

He was tall and very stately, and a very jovial sort of a person, and the whole family enjoyed him immensely. I remember one day Boyce said to him, "Tema, for goodness sake, why don't you take a bath—you stink!" The Masai had a distinct odor, there's no question about that. So we were camped near an area where he could get some water and bathe. So he not only bathed, but he took his chucca—this is just a big piece of white cloth that the Masai wrap around them— and all the time we'd seen him, this was kind of a reddish brown. This was from all the okra that they decorate their faces with and rub on their skin. Naturally, this gets all over their chucca, so it gets on a reddish brown color. So he took and washed this, and the next morning he comes out, and this chucca is all just pure white. Well everybody complimented him so much on it that every day he took a bath and everyday he washed his chucca in the middle of the afternoon. He thought this was great.

Did Tema have any previous experience in bathing with soap?

Well, I don't think he'd ever bathed as much as he did on this trip, that's for sure [laughing]. But the fact that all the girls were makin' over him that he was so clean and so nice, why that really pleased him, you know.

We had lots of fun with Tema. I come out of the coach early in the morning—the first morning after he put on his beautiful white new chucca. He'd be up early and we'd generally get up around three-thirty, four o'clock in the morning to go out. And I was sleeping in the coach with Flora, the children were sleeping in tents, and he'd be standing waiting for me to come out. Then I saw him this first morning, I bowed to him

like he was the king or something, you know. So he thought this was great, and he bowed back, holding his hands right straight out. This then became a morning ritual; every morning he was standing there waiting for me to go through this rigamarole of bowing to each other. He'd always travel with us in one of the Land Rovers, and knew the area and everybody very well.

The Masai race of people are a most interesting race. They live in this whole general area down clear into Tanganyika, down around the Serengeti National Park, down around Kilimanjaro. All of that area is inhabited by the Masai. They live in houses made of willows and covered with cow dung. They have a tremendous judicial system; they govern themselves. The head man of a village is absolute law. If somebody is caught stealing something, he is brought before the elders and the case is heard and the punishment is doled out. He may have to give somebody three cows or twelve goats or make restitution somehow for what he has done. They're completely self-sufficient. Their main diet is blood and milk. They take the cattle, and they shoot a little spear into the jugular vein and draw off, say, a quart of blood, and then they keep stirring this to keep it from coagulating, and then mix it with a large quantity of milk and this is their main diet, except on festive occasions or on occasions where they minister the circumcision rites when a child becomes of age. Then they slaughter two, three cattle, and have a big feast. Whenever we were on hunting trips, subsequent hunting trips and this hunting trip, naturally the Masai come into camp all the time, and they take off all the meat that you don't want, even the zebra. Elephant meat they love immensely, and the elephant fat—they take that and render it and use it for cooking.

But the Masai are stately, very interesting people. In fact, this Tema one day decided

that we might like to meet his wife. So, we were quite close to his village, so we took off and went over to his village. Now he had two wives by this time; he had his older wife and a brand-new wife about twenty-one years old. This is what the Masai do; [when] the wife gets a little older, they take on a younger wife. And, here we are down there tryin' to change their ways!!! They seem to be getting along pretty well.

As a present to his new wife, he took a, whole bunch of tin cans that we had opened in camp, from canned goods, canned beans or canned peas or things like that. These were very valuable to use as drinking utensils and things like this. He didn't take his old wife anything.

The whole family went over, and, we went right into his little "manyatta," they call it. The manyattas are all built in a big circle or what you might call a "boama." And around this circle of individual huts or manyattas are huge piles of thorn bush that they've put clear around it to keep the wild animals out at night because their cattle are all herded inside this boama at night. So the center part of this whole living area is one huge manure pile. Flies are unbelievably enormous; everybody had flies on 'em. The inside of their little manyattas are very simple. They have their cooking utensils; they build their fires right inside. They're very proud people, and a very good-looking people. Their skin is not jet black; it's—I feel that they're mixed with the Egyptians somehow, with the Egyptian race or maybe the Sudan people way back somewhere along the line. But they're entirely different from the Africans and the kikuyus or the general Africans that you find in the area. There's very little intermarriage among the Masai people. And they go out every morning with their cattle and bring 'em back in at night. They have goats also. And, as I say, they live a

super simple life. It's a custom that if a visiting Masai cozie to visit a manyatta or group of manyattas and wants to stay overnight, he can look around and whatever manyatta he shoves his spear in front of, he's allowed to stay in that manyatta and sleep with that man's wife. This is a custom, and it's been going on for many years and is still done today.

They have quite a dowry system. And I remember talking to one chap there and he was telling me how terribly expensive it was now if you wanted to get married. I said, "Well, how expensive is it?"

He said, "Right now it would cost fifteen cows, and twenty goats, and five or six big pots, and ten or fifteen blankets." So he said very few people can afford to get married because the dowries are so high.

What type of games did the Masai children play? Do you recall anything along that line?

No, I don't really. Poor little things, the boys have to go to work when they're about five, six years old; they take some of the goats out first, and they're out from early morning till late at night herding them. So they don't get much chance to play.

Did they have any playthings? Toys?

Oh, not that I remember. Bottle caps that I think they used to make little carts out of and things like that, but tin cans they'd use—. I don't remember anything in particular, no. We used to carry candy for the children all the time, hard candy. One item I do remember, we'd quite often see little wire carts that were made using parts of tin cans or bottle caps for wheels, and they'd be pulling or pushing these.

One other interesting thing that happened on this particular trip, we'd stop along the way if we'd see a Masai along the road to find out

if he'd seen any evidence of lion in the area. The Masai are anxious to get rid of the lion because the lion are, of course, a detriment to their cattle, and eat their cattle right along. We saw this one chap one day and stopped and talked to him, and it used to drive Boyce crazy because you had to go through quite a ritual when you stopped to talk to a Masai. You didn't get to the important point right away; you first asked him how his cattle were, and he went into a great discussion about his cattle, and he'd lost two to the lions three weeks ago and one had died and all that. And then eventually you asked him about his family, and he tells you about that. Fifteen minutes later you get to the point about whether he's seen any lion around the country. It would be very improper to just stop and ask him that question, whether he'd seen any lion.

So this one chap we saw several times, and then one day we saw him and he had a raised cross on the top of his head. I didn't know what this was and I asked Boyce to ask him about it. And he explained that he'd had a terrible headache and he went to the witch doctor and the witch doctor had cut open his head and let the headache out. And the scar was covered with cow dung and mud., and this is what this cross was formed. with—was about a quarter of an inch high and a quarter of an inch wide. It was molded and it was on the top of his head. And I said, "Well, ask him if it got rid of the headache."

And he said, "Yes, it was fine. The headache was gone. The doctor let it out." [Chuckling] Hard to believe, but I actually saw this.

One other interesting thing that we had on the coach trip, shortly before we left, a friend of mine had given me this gadget knowing that I always like gadgets. And this was a mechanical parrot. This parrot stood about, oh, sixteen, eighteen inches high. It was all

in bright colors, stood on a little stand, and with this parrot you could record something that the parrot said, that you wanted the parrot to say, on tape. This would then be on tape, and you could then press a button, the parrot would move his head back and forth, open his beak, flap his wings, and he would say whatever you had recorded. Well, I had it on my desk for a while, and when I knew somebody was going to come to the office—let's say that somebody by the name of George was coming into the office to see me, I'd record on the tape, "Why, hello George. Wait a minute, your fly is open." So [chuckling] this friend would come into the office and he'd look at this parrot, and I would carefully reach over so he didn't really see what I was doing, and press it, and the parrot comes out with, "Why, hello George. Wait a minute, your fly is open." And invariably George or anybody else I pulled it on would look down to see if the fly was open, which always amazed me. They never stopped to think how the hell was this parrot talking.

So we took it along on the trip. We had a fantastic time with it, because we would have some of the guides or like Boyce Roberts record things on it like in Swahili. So, I knew Tema hadn't seen it, so I got Boyce to record on it, not in Swahili, but in Masai. And he put on it: "Tema, the big bwana (meaning me) is very angry that you haven't found a lion for him. You must find a lion." So we brought Tema into the coach, and we had this on the dining room table, and he stood there, and he's lookin' at this bird with his eyes wide open, and I reach over and press the button and the bird gives out this message: "Tema! The big bwana's very mad, you haven't found a lion for him."

And as he said it, Tema leaned down—sort of just leaned over further and further and closer and closer to the bird. And, of

course, this message is very short and it stops right then. And he turned to Boyce and said in Masai language, "This bird knows my name and I have never met this bird!" [Laughing] Well, Boyce broke up in laughter; he couldn't— took him five minutes before he could translate it and tell me. So, then we showed Tema how it worked. So he recorded some things on it, and he took it out, and he had it the rest of the trip; he had it, he showed it to everybody. And he had as much fun as we did with this crazy parrot. This went on through the whole trip. There'd be a big crowd gatherin' and we'd bring this parrot out and let him talk to 'em in the local language. And they would go *crazy*; they couldn't believe it. It was such a simple, ridiculous thing that it created a lot of laughs and a lot of fun.

You mentioned souvenirs that you brought along. Can you describe some of the items?

Well, one of the greatest ones was a perfumed pen. This was a pen that wrote with perfumed ink. And we had RIRAJUJO on it and our names, and, oh, I brought several thousand of those along. They only cost, gee, I don't know—ten, twelve cents apiece. And then we had a Zippo-type lighter, various other types of things, some things that were nicer if we wanted to give people. But we passed out a lot of things, particularly to the people that had done us little favors and things along the way. It was nice to have to give away. These pens were tremendous. And of course, lighters, they love lighters. They were just gasoline-type lighters that you could put gasoline in, the old Zippo type. We had RIKAJJO on them.

One item I forgot about was in talking about Tema. We had taken on this trip, a large quantity of, what I call, junk jewelry, cheap costume jewelry—earrings, necklaces, big

gaudy earrings, finger rings, and then also some tiaras made out of simulated diamonds or brilliants or whatever you want to call them, that a lady would wear for a fancy dance ball or costume of some type. After Tema washed his chucca, we gave him one of these. And of course, with their curly black hair and all, it stuck right in; the band goes around the head. He wore it from then on until we left. I'll tell you, he was a proud Masai around that area with that fancy tiara.

Of course, we had this jewelry, and from time to time we'd pass this out to particularly use it quite often when we wanted to get pictures. The Masai have been spoiled quite a little bit; they now expect to get something for their pictures, for any photos' that you take of them. One thing that we carried on the coach was a Polaroid instant camera, and of course in those days it was fairly new at that time (that's 1964). And, this was a tremendous thing and really loosened the people up and got them into a position where you could photograph them without too much trouble.

The Masai also have extremely beautiful teeth. Of course, one reason for this is the fact that they drink so much milk, and also they clean their teeth very regularly. The use about a six- [or] eight-inch piece of a branch of some type of a tree or willow, which is about three-eighths of an inch in diameter, and they chew one end of it till it sort of becomes like—well, just like the bristles of a toothbrush. And then they—you will constantly see them with these in their mouth and rubbing their teeth, and actually cleaning their teeth all over with these sticks. All of the Masai use them. In fact, all over Africa you see them using these brushes to clean their teeth.

After the end of the safari, why we went back to Nairobi and Father Doyle left us and flew back to South Africa. And we proceeded the next day or two on down south into

Tanganyika. Just about this time, Tanganyika was becoming Tanzania. Tanganyika, of course, was at the border, and where we presented our papers and all and were cleared to come on in. We stopped at a small village where there was just a service station and a couple of stores, to buy gas. And the man that took care of the gas—well, actually we were buying diesel, of course—the man that took care of the station didn't have change for the currency note that I had, and he, through the sign language, directed me over to a Masai (these are the natives that live in the area) who was standing under a huge thorn tree a short ways from the gas station. So I derived from his sign language that the Masai must have the money. couldn't figure this out, but anyway, I went over to the Masai and showed him the note, and he reached down inside his chucca (this is a robe that the Masai wear) and pulled out a great big wad of bills and made change for me. So I went back and paid for the gas.

While we were there we noticed across the street was a little—about a block square (no, I don't think it was even that big); it was a small market day for this little village, so Judy and I wandered over through the market. They were selling vegetables, sugarcane and spices, beets and various things. And there was a witch doctor that had a table with all kinds of powders and lotions of various types on it. We stood and watched him speling off in Swahili about his goods. So he saw us standing there, and he smiled and he motioned for us to come over. And we walked over a little closer and he pointed to Judy, and then with his hand went over his stomach, meaning (which I figured out right away)—meant that if Judy wanted to get pregnant that he had the medicine. And so he went through these motions and, of course, poor Judy was embarrassed and he was all smiles and everything, so I said I'd take some of the medicine, Brought it back,

told Flora the story and she wouldn't even let us bring it on the coach.

Then we made a side trip over to view Kilimanjaro. Kilimanjaro is, of course, the huge, beautiful mountain in east Africa. It is 19,342 feet high. It's a fantastic sight. On later trips when I was hunting in Africa, Jim Lathrop and I hired a small plane and flew up to fourteen thousand feet level and circled the mountain at that point, and it was an unbelievable sight.

While we were there with the family, we went down into the game reserve that circles Kilimanjaro and drove around through there and saw the game in the reserve. After leaving Arusha, we went west and south and then took a side trip up to what is known as Ngorongoro Crater. This is a huge crater and a national park and a game reserve. Well, this crater is about ten miles in diameter, and the base of it, the inside of the crater, is very flat and all beautiful grazing land and is generally full of game. The trip with the coach up to Ngorongoro Crater was a tough one, and it's certainly one that I wouldn't make again. There was a lot of switchbacks and very difficult turns, and it was just all the coach could do to get up there. However, we did get up to the top and parked right alongside the lodge and then took the Land Rover down inside to view the game. This is one place where Flora got quite excited. We were trying to get in close to a rhino to get a good photograph of it, and the rhino took right out after us and we just barely got out of its way. And this is not too much fun because a rhino can tip a Land Rover over without too much trouble. They just get their horns in underneath it and lift it up, so we were kind of glad to get out of there.

On the way back from Ngorongoro Crater, we stopped at Lake Manyara, and there is a game park at Lake Manyara and it's

a beautiful sight with lots of flamingos there, too, at this place. We continued on south and entered Northern Rhodesia, which is now Zambia, at Tunduma. When we went into the immigrations office, which consisted of a little, small shack, to take our papers for the coach and the Land Rover and our passports and all, we were told that there had been an uprising of a religious sect in the area just south of Tunduma in an area called Chinsali. The officer in charge told us that it was somewhat dangerous to go through there; however, he didn't tell us that we couldn't go through. He said that we'd pass many burned villages and that there was a possibility we might come to a roadblock put up by these fanatics, that if we came along to a roadblock, if it was humanly possible at all, to crash through it, not to stop under any circumstances. And, he told us all about the various villages that had been burned and all.

Well, I had gone in to take care of these papers by myself and then Susano came along, Susano Lopez—he's the boy that was the cook on the coach. He came in about the time this man was telling me this big story, all about this uprising; and when he got through, I told Susano, "Now when you go back in the coach, don't say one single word about this to Flora." So we got in and quietly went on, and Flora went back into the rear end of the coach for something and she come back up white as a sheet.. Susano couldn't contain himself and had to tell her all about it.

Well, what had happened (we learned later on about this), there was a religious fanatic by the name of Alice Lumpa. She had been educated in Europe and had come back and started this religious sect and had taught these people that if they were true believers, these Africans, if they believed in her teaching, that they had the power to stop bullets with their bodies; a bullet wouldn't affect their body at

all. She had also told them that they could fly, and we were told later by some Rhodesian army officers that there were hundreds and hundreds of natives in the area that had broken arms and legs that had tried to fly out of trees. And he said it was—he had just come back from the area, this one fella we met in a town later on down the line, the town of Mpika—that it was pathetic because these natives—when the army would go in to try and stop the burning of the villages and all, that the natives would walk right into their firearms and even into machine gunfire, and there was just nothing they could do but mow 'em down. They thought they could stop the bullets.

Well, we drove down through this area, and we saw thirty, forty villages along the road burned to the ground, and of course Flora was beside herself; she was' really nervous about it. But we kept going and never had a bit of trouble. We drove into the first place where we were gonna stop that night, was Mpika, a little small village town. And, funny thing happened—we drove in and we saw a diesel pump; we knew that we needed diesel very badly. And we ran out of fuel forty or fifty feet from the diesel pump and coasted up to it. And we hand-pumped (this was an old, hand diesel pump) —we hand-pumped a hundred and forty gallons of diesel fuel into the coach.

This Alice Lumpa was later on captured and I guess put in jail. I haven't read anything about her in years. The newspaper *The Star* Johannesburg of August 10, 1964, carried a story headlined:

THEY PASSED CHINSALI IN THE HEAT OF LUMPA BATTLE

An American and his family who have almost completed a two and a half-month trip through central and east Africa, South Africa, Swaziland,

Mozambique by land cruiser are impressed with the friendliness and helpfulness shown them by whites and Africans they have met on their travels.

Then it goes on to basically tell about the coach and about the trip that we took and the problems that we had going through the Chinsali area.

From Mpika, we drove on south to Lusaka. We had almost a cardinal rule that we never drove at night with the coach, particularly because it was too difficult to find a place to stay overnight. At this point on the trip, we had no definite prearranged parking places like we did in east Africa because it was too difficult to pinpoint the exact days that we'd be in certain places. So we were more or less on our own as to places to stay. This was just a little bit of a problem because there were no caravan parks as such or camping places, and for instance in Lusaka we got in after dark and decided to stay at a large service station that was on a circular corner, big turnaround., that they often have where they drive on the left side of the road. It was a big service station and there was plenty of room, so we drove in and asked if we could stay there for the night, and they said sure that was all right. So, we stayed all night. The next morning we got up and there must have been two hundred Africans gathered around the coach, not bothering anybody, just curious and looking at it. Jim had to do a little work on the engine; the engine's in the rear, remember. And, Susano and I had to get out and arrange to hold the crowd back, so that they wouldn't bother him while he was tryin' to get in and do what little work he had to do on the engine. I went back in the coach after about an hour or so, and Judy came to me and she says, "Daddy, I don't care what you

do, but we've got to get out of here." She says, "I can't stand any more of these black faces lookin' in through the window at us. We've gotta move." Well [laughing] I said, "They're not doin' any harm."

She says, "Please, let's go somewhere else." So Jim and I took the Land Rover and went to the automobile association office to ask the lady if there was any camping place around that we could stay [at], because we wanted to stay in Lusaka a couple days. She said no, but that she lived on a ranch just out at the edge of town, and if we wanted to stay out there, we could. So she got in the Land Rover and came with us and directed us out to her home. And we parked right under some great big huge trees and stayed at her home for a couple of days. She was very gracious to us.

These Africans that were crowdin' around the coach, as I said, were causing no trouble at all; they were just staring, and they were climbin' up on the bumper and lookin' in and grabbin' ahold at the windshield wipers and just strictly curious, wondering what this thing was. We had constant troubles with people wanting to come into the coach. Of course, we had to draw the line because you couldn't have a stream of people constantly going through your *home*; that's what you had with you was your home, and it just disrupted everything. So we almost had to be sort of mean about it at times because we just had to say no.

From there we visited Victoria Falls; we saw the Livingston monument, big huge bronze monument to Livingston. Victoria Falls, of course, is one of the great sights of the world? it's breathtaking, it's just—you have to see it, you can't—there's hardly no way to describe it. Then we came back over and into Salisbury and down south into an area called Zimbabwe. The reason we went there was because of the famous Zimbabwe ruins.

The word *Zimbabwe* means "great house" or "houses of stone." The interesting thing about these stone houses and stone structures, walls, is that they were put together with no cement of any kind. The stones were sort of a lava-type stone, cut and fit, and piled up, and seemed to hold together somehow over all the years without any cement. They had been visited, of course, somewhere along the line, and all the goodies had been stolen, statues and the gold, and moved into various museums in Europe. But it was of interest to see these particular type of structures. I have never seen them anywhere else in the world. They're a little bit like some of the work at Angkor Wat in Cambodia, where they're fitted together carefully with no cement of any type to hold them together. It is interesting to note that Rhodesia, now integrating the blacks into government, will be called Zimbabwe.

While we're still in Rhodesia—of course, at the present time Rhodesia or Southern Rhodesia is in all the news, and Ian Smith is having a great big problem there at the present time. And just recently the guerillas, Rhodesian guerillas, under the leader of Joshua Nkomo, shot down a Rhodesian Airlines plane with about fifty-six persons on the plane, and thirty-six died. Eighteen of the survivors were gunned down by the guerilla after they were on the ground. Nkomo has recently made a statement that people had better be careful of flying Rhodesian Airlines because this could happen again. The Rhodesian government has determined that the airline was shot down with a Soviet SAM [surface-to-air missile] heatsensitive missile. This really put the crimp on the talks between the guerillas and Ian Smith, and God only knows what'll happen from here on out. They have a tough situation there. There are eleven or twelve blacks to one white, and yet the whites are trying to

govern the country, and of course, in the long run there's not much way that this is going to continue. The whites are in a terrible situation because if they want to leave the country, the government now allows them to only take out about seven, eight hundred dollars. If they leave, they have to leave their homes, their farms, their possessions. They can take a couple suitcases with them, and the biggest problem is that nobody will honor the Rhodesian passport. Great Britain doesn't want 'em, South Africa will take a few, but they really don't have any place to go. So I don't know what's going to happen. We read stories now where everybody is armed, all the whites, but they're so outnumbered that—and then after a savage situation where they shoot down this airplane and then ten of the eighteen survivors were gunned down by the guerillas, it makes real tough trouble because it's a cinch that the whites or Smith or someone is going to retaliate for this along the line.

Was there any inkling of this future trouble during your travels through the area?

Actually, I don't think we saw any of the troubles or any possibility of these future troubles, but even at that time it was in the papers, and it was destined to happen. Anytime whites are outnumbered twelve to one, there's going to be a problem; that's all there is to it. Rhodesia's a beautiful country, and some of these farms are gorgeous, lovely farms, and many of the blacks that are on the farms and work for the whites are extremely happy and would like to leave everything status quo. But naturally there are others who aren't so happy and want the blacks to rule.

Is Rhodesia made up of numerous tribes?

I'm not too familiar with that, but I would say there must be several tribes, several different tribes of Africans that make up the blacks in Rhodesia—couldn't certainly be one. But how it'll all come out I don't know; it's gonna be a tough one.

Anyway, from Zimbabwe we drove on down through Pietersburg and on down into Johannesburg. We stayed at a nice park area in Johannesburg. It wasn't a caravan park, but it was a park and we were allowed to stay there. It was very nicely set up, and we had some friends there that we had met earlier on the Union Castle Line; he was with the [First] National City Bank of New York. Their names were Freeman. We visited with them, and did all the things that you would do in Johannesburg.

We went to the mine dances. These are dances that are held by the Zulus and various tribes that work in the mines; they're very interesting, very colorful. They're generally held every Sunday afternoon. We went through a mine school, and this was particularly interesting. The workers in these mines come from different areas of Africa. You have to remember that South Africa was first settled by the Dutch. At that time there were practically no natives in South Africa, and the Africans gradually came down from the various countries up north, like from Mozambique, from Rhodesia, from Bechuanaland, I suppose from as far north as up into east Africa. They streamed down into South Africa because of the opportunity to work in the mines. Therefore, they all spoke different languages, so they had to form a common language for the mine workers. When they come in and go to work, they have to go to this school, learn this common language. This is a very simple language mainly composed of words that they have to know in the operation of the mines. They had

in this school, sections of it showing how to set dynamite, how to use the drills, how to put in the timbers. Everything you could think of connected with a mine was in this school. It was extremely well operated and well run.

We went down into a deep mine. This was a gold mine. unfortunately, I forget how deep this mine was. I may go back and talk to Rich; he undoubtedly will remember how deep this was. You get in a steel cage, literally a steel cage, with the doors locked. It's on a very steep incline, and this cage is built like a set of stairs, and you sit on different stairs that hold maybe twenty, thirty people. This was the way they take the miners down; this was the way they take the visitors down. Then you go down a track at a steep incline, at a very high rate of speed for a *long* time. And, you're going down further and further and further into the mine, and finally you get down at another level; you get out, and then you take an elevator down further into the depths of this mine. It gradually gets warmer and warmer and warmer, and it's so hot down inside this mine that their biggest expense in operating the mine is from the air conditioning that's necessary to cool it down to about a hundred degrees. And the men are working in the various areas of the mine where they're taking this ore or the overburden out, reaching into the veins. They're working maybe in drifts which only have a height of about three feet, so they're working on their knees and stooped over all the time, very difficult, hard work. The ore is brought out every so often. It's shot with dynamite; it's brought out and then into the cars and taken back up. There's hundreds of these gold mines throughout Africa or throughout South Africa. We only visited the one. It was very, very interesting.

Regarding mining, did you visit a diamond mine?

No, we didn't. We weren't allowed into any diamond mine. It's very difficult to get into a diamond mine. You'd really have to have some connections to do this. From Johannesburg we went across east over to Mozambique and to the capital, Lourenco Marques. We had heard of a caravan park that was right on the beach in Lourenco Marques, so we went to this place and it was a lovely caravan park, the first one we'd seen in all of Africa. And it was set up much like all of the caravan parks are today. A great many people from South Africa came over to this area with various types of camping gear and small, little campers and caravans, and spent two or three weeks vacation.

When you speak of a "caravan park," what exactly do you mean? What does it include?

Well, caravan parks are generally set up where there's shade, and it's sectioned off where you park your coach or your van. There are generally water taps and sewer outlets and electrical outlets. Now these differ all over. I think in this particular one, all they had was water available and electricity, so that you could plug into an outside line for your electricity rather than to use your own generator.

Is a general store usually found in a caravan park?

Oh sure, most of the caravan parks have a shower, toilets, and then also a store carrying a few staple goods, enough to get you by for a few days. But this was very nice, and the children enjoyed the beach and the swimming, and we had a very good time there. Now, of course, you couldn't go into Mozambique, no way you could with the problems that are existing there. Russia's in

there; there's no question about it. I guess Cuba's into Mozambique, just waitin' to go into Rhodesia.

Well anyway, from Lourenco Marques we came down through the separate little country of Swaziland. This was very interesting, extremely beautiful country, mountainous country. There wasn't anything of particular interest that we did there. Coming through Swaziland we did have to cross some very unusual bridges. These were bridges that were built across rivers, some of them extremely high, and they were mainly railroad bridges. But they had built out on the side of them. In other words, the cross beams on the bridge that held the railroad tracks extended on the outside of the bridge for another ten feet, let's say. And on this was built a roadway for cars. It was a one-way situation. In other words, they had a light system when it was green or red and you could go in one direction, or you had to wait until it changed to green in order to go. We *really* were in a quandary as to what to do because the sign said seven-ton limit, and the coach weighed close to fifteen tons. We got down under the bridge (Jim, Rich, and I did) and looked them over. They were comparatively new bridges, and they looked to be extremely well built. So we stuck our necks out and went across. The timbers on each side of the bridge were so close that the space between was probably about an inch shorter actually than the outside space between our tires. So we had to go across these bridges in low gear; we were actually pulling against the pressure of these two beams on each side of the bridge. It was a no-fun situation, I can guarantee you that.

One thing I forgot to mention is on the way over from Johannesburg to Lourenco Marques, we went into Kruger National Park. This is a huge park, game reserve, that borders on Mozambique, on the west side of

Mozambique. The park is about three hundred miles long and about a hundred miles wide. We drove the Land Rover extensively through this park and visited various areas of it and, of course, viewed all the game, much the same as we'd seen in east Africa in the various parks. They have one type of rhino they call the white rhino down there which is a different type than the rhinos in east Africa. It isn't actually white in color; it's named after a man who discovered this particular animal, and it's a little different type than the regular rhino. They're quite rare, and they've been protecting them very well and transporting some of the white rhino out of Kruger National Park into some other areas in Africa. Been quite successful in moving them.

We came on down then, after crossing about eight or ten of these lousy bridges, into Durban, South Africa. Durban is, of course, a big seaport town, very interesting. And, of course, in South Africa the children really got to see—not only the children, ourselves too—got to see apartheid in full bloom. By this I mean they got to see the tact that at the post office they had windows for Europeans and non-Europeans. On the street they'd have telephone booths for Europeans and nonEuropeans. Shopping areas would be designated European shops— would be Europeans or non-Europeans. Post offices (I guess I mentioned that) have windows that blacks simply could not go to. There might be a big line at the black window, but nobody at the non-European window, but the black wouldn't dare go over to the non-European window. This kind of shocks you at first, of course; you wonder how they can do this. Of course, we did it in this country for a long time, and I guess they're coming now to the transition that we came to a few years back. Interesting enough, there are many Asian Indians in South Africa. They came into

Africa to help with the mines and railroads and all that, and they brought them in from India and Pakistan. And they stayed and got into various forms of business. The Indian is considered nonwhite; a Chinese is considered nonwhite; a Japanese, oddly enough, is considered “honorary white.” This is because they want to do a lot of business with the Japanese people.

They had a very interesting Indian market we were told to be sure and visit. This was a huge market operated mostly by Asian Indians. And, we had a guide with us this particular day, and in this market he said, “Oh, you’ve got to come over and visit this one gentleman that has the meat market,” where he sold lamb. He said, “He has a huge diamond ring on.” So we went over, and he was sitting at a little desk in the center of the market, and his men were cutting meat up and selling meat. The guide called him over and introduced him to us and had him show us his big ring. Well, this ring must have been about a ten-carat diamond. It was a huge thing; I’ve never seen anything like it in my life.

So we visited with him. He wanted to know where we were from, and we told him, you know, just passed the time of day, and walked away looking at the rest of the market. And in four or five minutes, one of his workers came running up to us and said that he wanted to see us back at his shop—the owner did. So we went back, and he wanted to invite us to come to his home for dinner. Well, I was kind of in a quandary; I didn’t know just what to say. I didn’t know whether this would be right or proper that we go to visit an Indian’s home, who was a nonwhite, and eat in his house and everything—made no difference to me, but I didn’t know whether we’d be in trouble with the authorities. So I got the guide off to the side and talked to him, and he said, “No, I don’t think there’s any problem

with it.” He said, “I couldn’t do it, but,” he says, “certainly you can.” He says, “Why don’t you do it? It’ll be interesting.”

So we did. It was set up that we would go, and he sent a car to pick us up, and we went to his home. It was quite a big Indian family—children, and wife, and other relatives. And we had a superb Indian dinner, and afterwards, they showed Indian movies, which were—[chuckling] he had a projector and everything and showed these Indian movies that were really a complete bore to the whole family, but to them it was a big thing to be showing. He was in a very bad frame of mind because the area where he had this home that we were in—he’d lived in this home for his whole life, maybe say thirty-five, forty years, raised his family there, and all, and that area had just been *declared white*. So he had three or four months in which to get ready to move, and he had to move out of that area into a black area. He had no choice; the government would set the price that he could get for his house, and he had to move, period. So this drives home again the power of the government that they have over the people in South Africa. Here’s this man, lived all these years in this house, and all of a sudden the government says, “No, you can’t live here any more; we’re gonna make this a white area. An area for whites, and consequently no Indians, or blacks, or coloreds can live there.

The subject matter of these films that you viewed in this Indian home, which was what?

Well, one of them was an Indian movie in Hindi, which, of course, meant absolutely nothing to us. Hindi is the Indian language. Others were Indian dances, and Indian dances are quite weird and really of no interest to a westerner.

Highly stylized?

Yes, I've seen them in India, and they actually don't mean much to you. But we had a lovely evening at these people's house. They brought out all their gold wedding jewels and showed them to us. Of course, with the Indians this is a big item. When they get married, the groom has to give the bride all these ultrafancy gold necklaces and gold bangles and gold earrings and—an enormous amount of things. They had these all in plush-lined cases and showed them all to us very graciously. It really turned out to be an extremely interesting evening and was, in general, enjoyed by everybody.

More or less as a footnote, in your travels around the world, when you answered the question where you were from, did Nevada mean anything to people?

No. Never. Never, generally you'd explain that Nevada was one of the states, and it was located near California, then that meant something. Maybe if you said you were from Las Vegas, why it might mean more than you were from Nevada, because most of them had heard of Las Vegas. This is true in Hawaii, even. You talk about Nevada at all, why the subject immediately comes up Las Vegas; they don't know that there's any other part of Nevada than Las Vegas. Ninety percent of the people in Hawaii feel that way.

One other interesting thing that we saw in Durban—when Mrs. Graves and I had been there before, we had been walking down the street and walked by a building, and I could hear a very funny loud noise, sounded like ten thousand bees humming or a noise of that type. I discovered after listening to it a little bit, what it was; it was a great number of people all talking at once. We went further on down

the street and found where the entrance to this place was and found ourselves in a Bantu beer hall. Well, this I wanted to be sure and take the children back to, wanted them to see this, so I went down and made arrangements ahead of time, and we were told that it would be all right to come down. And, so we took the children to see this Bantu beer hall. These are operated by the government. The beer is a beer that they make in seven days. It's called cauffer beer; it's kind of a milky, cloudy type of beer. They bring it in tank trucks, to the entrance to the beer hall, take a big hose just like they were delivering gasoline and pump it into big vats inside the beer hall, which are refrigerated. The African comes in, the Bantu; he lines up and goes to a cashier's cage, and pays for the amount of beer that he wants to buy. They have different sizes of plastic pails. Let's say they have pint sizes and quart sizes, just like a plastic bucket—black. He might buy two or three quart sizes. Then he goes and gets in another line, and he'd paid for the quart sizes, so alongside this line there's a great pile of these plastic buckets turned upside down. He picks up one of the buckets, walks along—this is now a continuous line of blacks, of Bantus—he walks along into an aisleway and past a man who has his hand on a big lever. He puts the plastic bucket down in a trough and pushes it along, and the man pulls the lever and fills it with beer; he walks on through into a great huge room. It's made up of big long tables with benches on each side, and the Bantus are sitting at these tables drinking their beer and havin' one very enjoyable time and all visiting, laughing, joking. And like I say, it sounds just like the inside of a beehive. At one end of this beer hall, is an area where they can buy food, and different people have different concessions, and they cook the food, most of them, in open fireplaces, in great big copper and steel pots. And you'd see a whole side of

lamb hanging near the fire. People could come up, and they'd buy plates of this various types of food, take it back to the tables, eat it along with their beer.

I would guess that both times that we were in this beer hall, there must have been five to six hundred people drinking beer. They have a unique system; they leave it open for three or four hours, and then close it for an hour; everybody has to get out, and then in an hour they reopen it. This is to sort of keep people from drinking too much, and they get them out and I guess hopefully hope that some of them go home, [chuckling] and then new ones come in. But it's very well managed, very well handled, very sanitary, very clean, and was a real interesting thing to see. It was one of the highlights, really, of Durban.

One other thing in Durban is the rickshaw men. These are very colorful rickshaws, decorated up with bright colors; they're large rickshaws. And the rickshaw men are all very tall men, six-foot-six, six-foot-seven, six-foot-eight, huge men that operate these rickshaws. And they wear big, colorful hats and costumes, and the minute they see a tourist they crowd around you—this is down on the beach walk area—they crowd around you and vie to get you to ride in their rickshaw. Of course, we all took rides, and they jump up and down and run and walk, and it's kind of a comic thing. This is still being done today in Durban. It's the only place I've ever seen it done this way.

In this apartheid situation, the price structure was the same? They didn't charge the nonwhites more than they did the whites or the Europeans?

Well, of course, there were no whites in the beer hall; this was all black. No, I don't think that they charged any difference. The big difference is in the wages of the white and the

black. A black might be doing an exact same job that a white's doing and would get a half or a third as much money as the white. This is one very unjust part of the system. This is one thing that Father Doyle—he was teaching at that time in a town called Springbok up north of Cape Town, and it was really sad to him, most of his pupils were colored ; a colored is a person who is a mixture. He might be a mixture of Indian and African; he might be a mixture of African and white—they're called colored. There are four things: colored, black, white, and of course, the Indian, the Asian Indian. And then there would also be the Chinese, but they're considered black also. But for Father Doyle this was a very sad situation to him. He'd see children go through high school (he was teaching high school at the time) and very bright, brilliant children, but then they go out and they go out and they take a job and get only one-third as much as a white would get for the same job. He often mentioned this to me as being really [a] very disgusting situation as far as he was concerned.

How many contacts with Father Doyle have you had since then?

Oh many. Many, many. He made the trip through India With us. He flew into India and made that trip with us. He was here two years ago for my birthday party; he was here and I secretly invited Jim Alspaugh, too (remember Jim was our coach driver). None of the family knew that he was going to come. And Don Wai was here, who was our cook in India, and Father Doyle, and of course, we had a great reunion. And the children were all here, and they knew all of them and, of course, a lot of old times were talked about, particularly a lot of things about the trip in Africa.

Is he still in South Africa?

No, he's presently in Tampa, Florida. His health wasn't too good and he came back on a vacation and then he was never sent back, because of his health. (Father Doyle returned "home," as he said in a recent letter, to South Africa about January 1979.)

So we'd seen about all we could of Durban, and in the meantime we'd been making arrangements to find a shipping company for the coach. This didn't prove too difficult, and we wanted to ship the coach to Barcelona, Spain. So we arranged to stay there until the ship that was going to take the coach came in because we wanted to supervise the loading of it. The way they pick up a coach to put it on a ship, they have a steel cable net like a fish net, only made out of steel cable; it's probably three-eighths-inch or a half-inch cable. And they have one of these that goes under each wheel, and then great big, what they call, spreader bars for the cables that come down from the crane to hold the cables away from the outside of the coach. So, if there's four of these nets come down, and they're gotten under the wheels, you lay them in front of the coach and then drive over onto them, and they fit around the tires and then you have pads that you put in against the coach, so they don't scratch the side of it, and the crane picks it up just like it weighed two and a half pounds. Pick it up, move it carefully onto the deck of the ship, and then we had with us huge canvases, very large canvases with grommets in the edges of it (it's [grommet] a brass ring, you know, through which ropes can be put). And we would literally wrap the coach in these big sections of canvas; we had three different pieces of it. This kept it—it served two purposes; of course, the coach was locked and the captain had the key, but with this canvas around, why nobody was peeking in the windows, looking into it all the time, none of the employees on the ship, the stevedores

and all, and it really made it quite difficult for anybody to try to get into the coach.

So it was shipped to Barcelona, and Flora and I and the family flew to Cairo, and Jim and Susano flew home. I saw this as an opportunity for the children to see the sights of Egypt and also [to] go on over to the Holy Land and visit all of the Holy Land at the same time. This we did. And it was a great experience for them. Of course, they did everything that you do in Egypt—we went to see the pyramids, and we rode the camels, and we went to the light and sound show at the pyramids which is an *excellent* show. This tells the story of the pyramids in light and music, and it was very well done and a most interesting show. We went, of course, to the fabulous museum in Cairo. It's rather in decrepit state, but we got to see all of the items from King Tut's tomb, the treasures that were taken out of this tomb. These are the same ones that are on tour of the United States right now. These are truly amazing things, and it was a great opportunity for the children to be able to see them and, of course, to also visit the Holy Land and see all of the sights that there are to see there. I won't go into the details of all that, but we were there for a week or ten days in both Egypt and the Holy Land. Then we came on home, and in a few days they went back to school.

How did you travel through Egypt and Israel at that time?

Well, of course, we flew into Cairo, and the only thing we did in Egypt was in the perimeter of Cairo, the pyramids and the museum and, those things. We didn't go up the Nile to Aswan or anything like that, on that particular trip. We did have a rather interesting thing. We had the same guide that Flora and I'd had there before; he was the American Express man; they called him

“Dragaman Number One.” This is an oriental word meaning “professional interpreter.” He was the number one guide for American Express. His name was, naturally, Abdul, but he was a tremendous guide. He was one of the best. And Mrs. Graves and I were in Egypt just a few years ago and just by chance asked the driver coming in the car from the airport if he happened to know if Abdul still worked for American Express, and he knew him very well. And he had him call us the next day, and he came to the hotel and acted as our guide again.

He had arranged a dinner on the great Sahara desert for us. We had done this once before, so I wanted to repeat it for the children. You ride out in a car out on the desert at night. You can hardly see where to drive; you wonder how they know where they’re goin’ because you’re just on the desert, and you finally come to a beautiful, elegantly colored tent. This tent is all decorated on the inside with applique work. These are pieces of colored materials that are sewed on to create a design inside the tent. The floor of the tent is completely covered with oriental rugs. And, they serve a complete dinner. They had a belly dancer and also a horse act that came into the tent. And, so it was an interesting evening and something, I’m sure, that they’ll never forget.

In Israel, how was the transportation arranged?

Well, you hire a guide and get a car and keep the guide with you, and driver, and everything’s very close together there, you know, so that you don’t have any great distances to travel, and you get to see all the various sights and the various churches and everything that you want to see.

Was that your first visit to the places of—?

No, Flora and I had been there before. I don’t remember just what year, but we had been to the Holy Land before.

What’s the biggest surprise in seeing some of these religious shrines? That surprised you the most or disappointed you the most?

I think the biggest disappointment is the condition of the room of the Last Supper. It isn’t kept up; it’s a horrible-looking room, if it is the room of the Last Supper. I mean, who knows? They claim it is, but I would think that somebody’d keep it in a little better state of repair than it is. Graffiti all around and dirty. I don’t know why somebody doesn’t do a better job of that.

When you secured the bus for the season, what steps were taken to insure that it would be as you left it?

Well, of course, remember at this time it’s on a ship, going to Barcelona, and we came on home from Egypt and the Holy Land. And then this trip from Durban up to Barcelona took, several months. It was a slow freighter, made a lot of stops, and rambled around various places. We had made arrangements through an automobile association to take the coach off and take care of it, get it in storage. Along the line I got concerned that this wasn’t the greatest thing in the world havin’ people inside the coach because after all, all our clothes were in there, all our belongings and everything. And, there’s no way that they could operate it; they’d just have to tow it. They couldn’t have started it. So, I talked it over with Jim and Flora, and we decided what the dickens, let’s go meet the coach and do a short trip in Spain that fall. So we did. We flew to Barcelona. We knew, of course, the day the coach was to get in; we flew there a

day or two ahead, and believe me, it's a good thing we did. We were on the ship that had the coach on it, and they were gettin' ready to unload it and they were going at it completely wrong in every way, and the stevedores were all chiefs and no Indians. They were all telling each other what to do. Finally, I had to take ahold of the situation with Flora interpreting for me, and really slow 'em down and get 'em to listen to how the thing really should be done, or I don't think there's any question that they would have dropped the coach into the ocean [chuckling]. But we got it off and got it off safely, and went ahead and started another trip.

So this was in the fall of 1964. The weather was beautiful. We spent a few days in Barcelona visiting a Basque friend of Flora's there. Incidentally, it was rather funny. We had been out one night before and gotten into an area of town that was kind of a rough area all right, and we were walking around and there was some music in one bar and we went in and they had a little waif, a child, dancing on the top of this bar for money. Well, naturally we gave him some money, and we went on walking around through this whole area, and the next night we were to go out to dinner with this friend of Flora's. His name was Tomas Osa. He was the brother of a very good friend of Flora's in Boise. So he was going to take us to dinner to a restaurant called El Caracol ("The Snail"), and this was a fantastic restaurant—big open exhibition cooking, old, old restaurant. The food was just super. You entered by walking through the kitchen in this restaurant. It's the only restaurant I've ever seen like that in my life. But anyway, as we were going to this restaurant, he said now to get to this restaurant, he told Flora we'd have to go through a very terrible and dangerous part of town. He didn't speak any English, so he told Flora in Basque to tell me

to take my wallet out of my hip pocket and put it in my breast pocket, take my watch off and put it in my pocket, and for her to hold her handbag real carefully. And so where do we go? Right in the same area that we'd been the night before. When we [chuckling] told him we'd been walkin' around through there and been in and out of two or three of the bars, he almost had a heart attack. He would [laughing] no more have thought of going down through this area of Barcelona than the man in the moon.

So we drove down the east coast of Spain, down through Valencia. And, of course, there's so much to see in Spain; there's been so many civilizations through Spain, so many cultures. The Romans were there, and the Moors were there, and God only knows who else was there. And we visited lots of these ruins and various towns. As you go along the food changes in areas; in Valencia you get a marvelous chicken dish called *paellia Valenciana*. This is a chicken dish cooked with saffron and rice and, of course, stock and chicken, and mussels, shrimp, clams. Everything's cooked in a big copper pan. Then on down to Malaga, which is down the southern coast of Spain, and Marbella—we haven't been there for years, but I read where this has been built up tremendously. They've got an enormous number of hotels and condominiums, practically built wall to wall all along the whole coast in this general area.

We went down to Gibraltar. We didn't take the coach over there naturally, but we went across and visited Gibraltar. We were in Algeciras. We went on up from Algeciras up to Seville or "Sevilla," as they call it. And, we found a place to park, a temporary place to park the coach and decided to stay at the Alphonso Trece Hotel. That means Alphonse the *Thirteenth* Hotel, and it was actually built by the king, Alphonso the Thirteenth—a

fantastic old hotel with great dining rooms and, super service, great big rooms, very old hotel, but a marvelous hotel.

We decided we wanted a guide to show us around a little bit, and then I had to have somebody find a place to store the coach. So I went down and talked to them down in the front office about a guide. And they said yes, they could get one, and I neglected to say that I wanted a man because I'm not too crazy about women guides, but forgot to. So I went back upstairs and they called and said the guide was there. So I go down and went up to the desk, and they said, "Here's your guide."

And it was a little, short, stocky woman. She was about five-foot-six, I think, quite heavy, and the first thing she says to me, she looks at me, and she says, "Well! How's the weather up there?"

Well, I've only had this said to me about ten thousand times, and so this really set me off. I thought, "Holy cow, what have we got here?" So, I said, just a minute and I'd go up and get my wife. I went up and told Flora, says, "Got a damn woman down there for a guide." I said, "I don't know, we'll take her today and then get somebody else tomorrow."

Well, her name was Pilar Gonzalez. Pilar turned out to be probably the best guide we've ever had anywhere in the world. She was an eager beaver; she did everything. She knew how to go everywhere; she knew what to do, what to see, how to get in. There were absolutely no closed doors to her. So I put her to work to find a place to store the coach. And, we had the Land Rover, of course, still with us to get around with, and it was the funniest thing to see her climbin' into that Land Rover. She could hardly get her little short legs up on the steps. But she and Jim went out by themselves one day, and she had a whole list of places, and they found an excellent place to store the coach. So that was completed,

and we took it down and put it in storage and got it all put away, you know, secured for the winter, unhooked the battery and drained the water and all those kind of things. And, then we proceeded to stay in Seville for a few more days and saw some more of Seville.

While we were there, Pilar told us that we should come back for what is called "Holy Week in Seville." I had never heard of it before, nor had Flora. And then a week after Easter starts the big "feria of Seville." This is the famous Seville fair. So we planned even while we were there to do that the next spring, the next Eastertime. And we made arrangements with Pilar to be our guide. She made arrangements to get us tickets in the grandstand, which were very difficult to get, to watch this Holy Week show. This is one of the greatest spectacles that I've ever seen, and it's a funny thing that it isn't very well written up; you don't read many stories about it, and there's very few people know about it.

For one week prior to Easter, there are the churches of the various dioceses and the various churches all around Seville—they have had for years huge floats like you would have in a parade. These are gigantic things, some thirty, forty feet long, twelve, fourteen feet wide; and on them are scenes of the Passion of Christ. Maybe one will be the scourging at the pillar; another will be a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin. Each church has its own particular saint or a particular part of the Passion of Christ that they depict in these big floats. The floats are carried by men on their backs from the church which may be ten miles out of Seville, into Seville, down through the main streets of Seville past the viewing stand into the main church, which is a huge beautiful cathedral in Seville, back out and back home to their particular church. They are so heavy that they may require fifty men carrying them on their shoulders. You don't

see the men- because they have a drapery material hanging down from the side of the float down to the street. On the back of each coach is a leader and he has kind of like a door knocker. And when the float is setting down and the men are resting, he knocks it once; the men get ready to get into position to pick it up. There are bars under these floats that the men position their shoulders under. The bars are padded with pads. So the men get into position; he hits it twice, the men lift it; he hits it the third time, the men start walking. They'll carry it for maybe as far as they can carry it, maybe an eighth of a mile or something like that, and then they have to set it down again.

Each day there are—I'm guessing now because I don't know, but I would say each day there are probably fifteen or twenty of these floats that are brought into Seville, through the church, and back out again. And you can sit in the viewing stand, as we did, and see them.

As Holy Week progresses, the finer of the floats, the bigger floats, are brought out. Many of the floats, particularly of the Virgin, that are brought have hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of jewels attached to them. These jewels have been given by people who over the years have been granted favors by their prayers to this particular virgin or this particular saint. And the amount of jewels on some of them runs into the millions of dollars. I've never seen such jewelry and things that are attached to the clothing and strung around the neck of the various statues.

This goes on, of course, through Good Friday, and it's really a sight to behold; it's something that you can see nowhere else. There are some other cities in Europe that have this, but nothing in the grand scale that they have it in Seville. And then, of course, we went to Easter Mass in the cathedral. Pilar got

us special passes to get in to be able to attend the special mass on Easter Sunday.

So now we still have this guide that I had thought I wasn't going to like, and by this time we think the world of her because she'd take me into places and tell 'em I was with *Life* magazine. Well, they'd say, "No, we don't allow anybody—no photographers can come in at all."

"Well" she'd say, "this man's with *Life* magazine; he's doing a story on such and such." She's telling 'em all in Spanish and pretty soon there we'd be inside takin' pictures. She had the guts of a government mule, I'll tell you.

Well anyway, while we were there she'd, of course, told us about the fair (*feria*) which comes a week after Easter, and we decided we wanted to see that. So she arranged to get all the necessary tickets and everything for that, and we flew to the Canary Islands to spend the intervening week. We had a nice week in the sun in the Canary Islands and then flew back to Seville for the fair. The fair is as different as anything I've ever seen. They have one whole section of Seville which is kept open; it's just for this fair. And they build stalls or actually little buildings of every type and size and shape that you can imagine. And these are all owned by old families or by organizations. Let's say a particular family has this particular building, and they go in and decorate it with, oh, the finest of cloth decorations, silks and satins, and carpets on the floor; they move in furniture. And this particular little house for this family becomes sort of an open house for all their friends during fair week, so that in each one of these places you see different people coming in, visiting, having drinks, having something to eat. And there are *hundreds* and *hundreds* of these, each one a little more elaborate than the last one you saw. These families have been doing this for

centuries; it's a tradition. We were invited into many of them. They'd just see us come along, grab our arm and first thing you know, you have a drink in your hand, you have some food of some type; they had beautiful food laid out. Many of them had entertainment. And each afternoon—I don't know just at what time, but probably around three, four o'clock in the afternoon—most of these families have old beautiful horse carriages. And, members of the family dress up in their fine, beautiful old-fashioned clothes, and there's a huge parade inside the fair grounds with these beautiful coaches drawn by elegant, beautiful horses, and many señoritas riding horses individually, hundreds of them really. Or, a man and woman will be riding horses individually, all in the costume of their particular family or their particular section of the country they come from. It's something that you see absolutely nowhere else in the world.

Attached to this is the largest carnival that I have ever seen in my life. And I have probably visited most carnivals that are ever available, sometime in my life. This thing is *huge*. It must have had two hundred different rides and five hundred or maybe six hundred different concessions of, you know, throwing balls and shooting guns and things like that. It was *unbelievable*. All through this area there are places to eat, all different types of food, excellent. Everybody's drinking, everybody's having a good time, and we never saw one fight or one problem of any kind whatsoever. It was very refreshing to see so many people enjoying themselves so much without having any disturbances. And we were there a full week, and saw no disturbance of any kind.

What ideas for the Nugget did you come away with from this trip?

Oh, I don't think on this particular trip I came away with any that I can remember. Really there was nothing there that could be applied to the Nugget operation. Entirely different world, entirely different scenery.

Would a Spanish or a Mexican cuisine fit into the scheme of things at the Nugget?

Well, I don't know. Maybe a real good Spanish-type restaurant would, yes, probably would.

Speaking in general terms now about the coach touring that you did, how much of the driving did you do?

Oh, occasionally I would spell Jim to drive, but not too often. Most of the driving, except on that long trip from Amsterdam to New Delhi, most of the driving was not too long. We wouldn't drive too much in any one day. So it was not too bad for Jim to do it all.

How many flat tires did you have on your travels?

We had only one flat tire, and this was in Italy. And, it was right in downtown—I forget the town; I think it was in Florence. We started asking some questions and found out that there was a big truck tire shop just around the corner, maybe a block and a half away from where we had the flat tire. Well, the tire was one of the duals, so we were able to drive the coach around to this place and they had, naturally, all the heavy jacks and power equipment to change the tire and fix and repair the damaged tire in no time at all, so that was pretty lucky.

Did you experience any generator trouble at any time?

Well, later on, yes, and we'll get into that.

How about transmission trouble?

No, we had practically no problems at all with the coach on all these trips.

What spare parts were taken along?

Oh, we had numerous spare parts stashed all over the coach. I can see no reason to list them, but we had lots of spare parts, of anything that might go wrong. And we had the situation where the engine in this coach is used all over the world to operate generating plants, so parts were pretty much available in every country that we were in, and we had a list of all the dealers of this particular General Motors engine. So we never had any big problems.

What did the first aid kit include?

Well, it was a very professional first aid kit, but I don't think we had it out once or twice, and just for minor things.

How many accidents or near accidents did you have?

Well, the one accident we had with the Land Rover, and I'll get into that when we come to that part of it, but other than that we had no problems, which is amazing for all of the driving that was done and especially drivin' on the wrong side of the road in a lot of those countries.

How would you describe the roads?

Well most of the roads, even in Africa, were pretty good, except for Tanganyika the road was gravel and a lot of washboard.

The roads up this far on the trip were quite good. In Spain, of course, the roads were very narrow, and all of the main highways wind through the town. And then, of course, when you get into the towns, the streets get extremely narrow, and we'd have to watch out for overhanging signs and many times have to back up in order to make a corner. But none of this presented any big problems; it was just a little inconvenience that went along with the trip.

And the majority of the driving was done to the left of the road.

Well, no. Not in Europe. It was in Africa, but not in Europe. It was all on the right-hand side. England is still on the left-hand side, but we never were in England with the coach. In India you drive on the left also.

Well, we'll go ahead and continue briefly on some of the coach trips that we made in Europe. We had finished the trip in 1964 and put the coach in storage in Seville. In the fall of 1965 we went back to Seville and picked up the coach, found everything in order; it hadn't been bothered at all, and worked our way up north—not going into Madrid. We went up through Cáceres and Salamanca, up through Valladolid and into Burgos. We're now getting into the edge of the Basque country; and in Burgos, I remember, we visited friends of Flora's who had formerly been in the United States and then returned to Spain, and they prepared a fabulous dinner for us. It was a baby goat, of all things, completely barbecued, it was something that I'd never experienced before, and was certainly delicious. Flora had a good visit, and of course Flora speaks fluent Basque, so this makes it quite easy for her to visit and be in the Basque country.

Then we went on up to Santander and over to Lekeitio. Lekeitio is a small fishing village on the Gulf of Vizcaya. And this is the birthplace of Flora's mother, and she has numerous cousins and relatives in Lekeitio. It's a very interesting village, and we had a nice visit there. Flora, of course, enjoyed seeing all these people that we had seen on one trip before to Spain, to the Basque country, and, of course, their seeing the coach was something that they couldn't believe. And we had dinner in their homes, and we took them to dinner, and eventually left that particular area and went down through Bilbao. This is a huge industrial city in the Basque country. We didn't know exactly where to park the coach, we drove around a bit, and we drove down the side of a canal or river, and there was a big vacant lot, which we could drive the coach into right along this river, had a lot of shade and trees. So we just pulled in there. Naturally, we drew a crowd right away, and they were amazed to find that here was somebody from America that spoke Basque. And we visited with people, and then proceeded to have our dinner.

I have forgotten to mention that as we went into each country, I had previously had flags made—porcelain, enamel flags, that were approximately six or seven by nine or ten inches. There was a red strip that ran around the coach, and these were made so that they fit right into this strip; and as we entered each country, we would put the new flag on for that particular country. We had had a flag made for the Basque country. At this time, of course, in the Basque country the flag was not allowed to be displayed, nor was even the Basque language allowed to be taught in school. And I told Flora at the time, I said, "We're gonna run into some trouble on this. Here we're putting the Basque flag right alongside the Spanish flag." And she said well,

she didn't care; she wanted the Basque flag on the coach.

So we were having dinner, right in the middle of dinner one night, and a loud knock came on the door. I went outside and here were three Spanish gendarmes waving their arms and speaking to me in Spanish, which, of course, I didn't understand. They were pointing to the Basque flag. Well, I knew right away what the problem was, and so I brought them into the coach and Flora pretended that she didn't understand them, and very fortunately didn't speak anything in Basque. Finally, why, they got it through to us that they wanted the Basque flag taken off the coach. All the time Flora was not conversing with them, and so I went out and finally agreed that I'd take it off. I did, and they wanted the flag, wanted this Basque flag—they wanted to take it with them. I refused to give it to them, and they put up quite a loud argument all in Spanish, to which I just shrugged my shoulders, took the flag and went in the coach and closed the door. I was sure that we would hear further from them. However, we didn't and that was the last of that incident, and we didn't put the Basque flag back on until we entered France.

We then went down to the little town—first we went over across to San Sebastian where Flora's relatives on her father's side live. They operate a small jewelry store in San Sebastian, and we visited with them and had a great time. We went down through Tolosa, and down to Segura. This is a very small village where Flora's father was born. His sisters, two sisters at that time, and some cousins still lived in the house, which was built in 1549. This date is on the front of the building. It's a huge stone house, walls about two to three feet thick—the stable on the first floor, living on the second floor, and bedrooms and other living on the

third floor, including a small beautiful private chapel.

We had an interesting visit there, and one of the sisters ran a little tiny shop on the street side of the house, a little shop where they sold some wine and a few groceries and canned goods and things like that. The people live very, very simply. They farm some land in that general area. They had a pigsty on the ground floor, and the pigs were so clean and well groomed that you could bring them into your living room if you wanted to. To get fresh eggs for breakfast, they just lifted a trap door and crawled down some stairs and went into the chicken coop and got some fresh eggs for breakfast. Living exactly as they have since the 1500s, absolutely no difference whatsoever. I should make one comment—when we first came into the house, a cousin—of course, they knew we were coming and everybody was there to greet us and whoever wasn't there, word went right out and they all gathered in from around town—and one of the cousins came to me and he got ahold of my arm and took me upstairs and over to the bathroom. And I shook my head; of course, I didn't speak Spanish or Basque and I shook my head and said, no, that I didn't have to go to the bathroom. So, a few minutes later, another one of the cousins gets ahold of my arm, takes me over—up and shows me the bathroom. So I said to Flora, I said, "They keep taking me up and wanting me to go to the toilet."

She says, "Oh my Lord, they just told me the story. They just finished putting in this new toilet. This is the first that they'd had a toilet inside their house, and they were simply proudly showing you the toilet." I only learned one word of Basque in all the time I was in the Basque country, and that was *Gutxi-Gutxi* (pronounced "gitchy-gitchy"), which means "small, small." Because the minute that you are inside the door of a Basque house, the

wine comes out, the brandy comes out, the loaf of French bread, and they immediately want to shower you with something to drink and something to eat. So I constantly had to say, "Gutxi-Gutxi," which means "little, little," "small, small."

The coach, of course, we almost got tired of showing the coach to people. We visited some of the towns where Flora looked up Basque sheepherders who had stayed at her mother and father's home in Boise, and then had returned to Spain. Many of them, were just like brothers to her, and of course, they had finished their time at sheepherding and had returned home. These were the ones that had saved their money; most of them spent all their money, and then they were also drawing Social Security in Spain.

San Sebastian is a beautiful, beautiful city. It's built on a huge circular bay with a beach that runs completely around this circle. It's about a complete half circle. And it's the summer home for all of the government and the wealthy people of Spain because, of course, Madrid and the south of Spain gets very warm in the summertime. They come to San Sebastian and have their second homes there, many of them do, all the royalty, all of the government officials, big government officials have homes there.

We left San Sebastian and went up through Saint Jean-de-Luz. Incidentally, this is where Bob Laxalt spent quite a little bit of time while he was studying in the French Basque country and Spain. And one previous trip we had visited him there. We went to Biarritz; we saw the casino there, which is no different than any other European casino—entirely different, of course, from American casinos. They only open in the evening and the dealers are all in tuxes, and it's very cold and very stiff type of operation.

Went through Bayonne and up to Toulouse, and then over to the coast, through Marseille, and through Nice, and into Monaco. Driving through these little towns, especially in the Basque country, was really something with this huge coach. I mentioned before that we had to back up and do a lot of jockeying to get around some corners and had to keep, really, a sharp outlook for overhanging signs that the coach would have run into. We visited the Monte Carlo casino in Monaco, and then proceeded to enter Italy. Went up to Geneva or Geneve, on up to Milan, down through Bologna and into Firenze, which is, of course, Florence.

Our number two daughter, Judy, was in school in Florence for her third year. It was a program called Gonzaga in Florence; and since she was majoring in art, this was a tremendous year for her. And Florence of all cities is a fabulous place for an art student to spend a year.

We found a place to store the coach in Florence, which was in the basement of a brand-new garage that had been built. This was a concrete structure, and we were able to drive the coach down into this basement and over in a corner and cover it up and leave it. It was a beautiful place to leave the coach. We had a great visit with Judy, and of course saw all the sights of Florence.

Of course, in Florence there are so many things to see. Florence was under the rule of the very powerful Medici family for many many years. There is the Uffizi Gallery or Museum, which was designed and built in 1574. It's now considered one of the largest and most important museums in the world. They have every work of art imaginable in it.

Shopping in Florence, is of course, tremendous. At that time things were very reasonable all along the area of the Ponte Vecchio. A lot of silver booths and places

where they actually work on gold and silver jewelry; gloves—Italy and Florence in particular specialize in ladies' very fine gloves and shoes. There's the Ponte Vecchio bridge, across the Arno River. They've had a lot of flooding along this river, but the bridge is very unusual. On each side of the bridge it is completely filled with small, most unusual shops of every type and description—antique shops, jewelry shops, glove shops, everything that you can think of. And, of course, it's a shopper's paradise to shop on this particular' bridge.

It was in 1966 that we went back to Florence then to pick up the coach, and we had been out of Florence just three days when they had some tremendously heavy rain and huge floods, and the Arno River flooded and also almost took out the Ponte Vecchio bridge that crosses the Arno River. Numerous other areas in Florence were flooded. The huge beautiful square had water two, three feet deep in it. And, we found out later, that the garage where we had stored the coach and taken it out just three days earlier, had fourteen feet of water in the basement. So this was a very, very close call.

This was to be the trip when we were going to go into east Europe. We left Florence, went up through Venice, over, up through, and into Innsbruck (which, of course, is fantastically spectacular), over to Salzburg. Then we crossed over into Germany and up to Munich, and then north up to and across the border into Czechoslovakia. We were a little apprehensive about this, and we found no trouble crossing the border. They inspected us a little more so than they had in crossing other European borders, but not particularly so. Everything, of course, immediately became different; the buildings were very drab, the people were wearing drab clothes, the roads were mostly cobblestone and extremely narrow, and we drove on into Prague.

We hadn't the remotest idea where to park the coach; however, we drove around Prague a little bit and found a kind of a quiet side street that was in an apartment area, where there was room enough to park the coach and there was no traffic or anything, so we just pulled up and parked. We had it there for three or four days with no trouble at all. We took the Land Rover and went into downtown Prague and went to the tourist department and found a guide that could work with us for a few days. She was a lady who was the wife of an architect. She turned out to be a very fine person. To start out with she was very reticent to discuss anything but the buildings and the history and things like that. But gradually, why, she opened up and let us know really how sad and tough the situation was in Czechoslovakia.

I'll mention one little item. I asked her one day—naturally she lived in a government apartment—I said, "What happens if, let's say that your toilet doesn't work, what do you do? Do you phone to the repair department or something?"

She said, "Oh, no, no. You don't phone anybody. You go down to the particular office that takes care of this, you fill out a big long form, and they tell you well they'll get to that when they can. So you wait three or four weeks and then you go back and talk to them, and they get very indignant and say, 'Well, it's only been three weeks.' And you say, 'Well I know, but our toilet isn't working.' They say, 'Well, use your neighbor's toilet, that's all right.' You say, 'Well, that's what we've been doing, but it's very inconvenient.' And they shrug their shoulders, and say, 'Well, the man will come when he gets time.' So finally, why, the man comes; he looks at the toilet, and says, 'Oh, this is a very difficult job; I'll have to come back next week. I don't think I can do this today.'"

So she said, "You go and get out your five or six packages of cigarettes that you've saved for just such a purpose, you give them to the man, and mysteriously he fixes the toilet right away and puts it in working order." And this is the routine that they have to go through to get a simple little thing like the toilet fixed.

People were wearing practically all the same type of clothes. Everybody was wearing a raincoat. It wasn't raining, but it seemed to be the type of coat that they had to keep warm, with many layers of sweaters underneath. *Every* man that I saw on the street carried a briefcase. This was mainly to carry his lunch in. I never—I don't believe I ever saw a man without a briefcase.

In Prague we went with the guide one day to buy some meat and bacon. So, she found a store for us, and there was a line coming out of the store clear onto the sidewalk. So we stood in line and finally got inside, and the clerk—I told the clerk that we wanted the whole side of bacon (it was unsliced)—told her through the guide. Well, she was absolutely startled and amazed, and she and the other clerks and everybody had to have a consultation. And they finally decided to sell me the side of bacon. There were lots of people in the store. So she weighed the bacon, gave me a little slip of paper with the weight on it, and then the guide and I went and got in another line to a cashier's stand and stood in this line for fifteen, twenty minutes. There were two girls at the cashier's stand, and they each stamped the slip with a rubber stamp, took our money; then we took the little slip which had been stamped, showing that it was paid, and got into a third line and waited another fifteen, twenty minutes to pick up our side of bacon. We were in the store just under two hours buying just this bacon. This we experienced all throughout the east European countries. You had to stand in line for everything, and not

only that but one store carried bread, another store carried eggs, another store carried meat. So this meant that you were standing in three, four, five lines all the time to do your shopping, plus the fact that you had to pay for the merchandise before you got it. You never paid to the clerk that waited on you; you paid over at a cashier's stand. It was really quite a chore to go shopping.

Milk, you took your own container into the milk stores, and they dipped it out of a big milk [can] into your container. This was everywhere. There was no place that you could buy bottled or cartoned milk, naturally. This was not only in Czechoslovakia; this was in all the other countries that we went into.

We enjoyed visiting with this guide in Czechoslovakia because she finally opened up a little bit and did give us somewhat of an inside on what the conditions were in Czechoslovakia.

One interesting thing, in any of these lines that you saw in any of the stores in any of the countries in east Europe, the people were standing in line, and with many lines we'd have to stand in for anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour—you never saw them visiting, you never saw them laughing, you never saw them talking. They were simply like mannequins moving along in the line as if there were nobody else in the whole building.. Struck me as just weird at first, but then, of course, you get used to it, and apparently they were afraid to visit, afraid to talk or something. That must have been it.

What were the fixtures in the stores like?

Oh, they were extremely old-fashioned. The stores were almost like antique stores to us today, or even in that day. Very old-fashioned stores, very much in disrepair. Of course, you must remember that the government operates

everything. The government owns every jewelry store, every grocery store, every meat store, and there is no competition so they don't have to hire extra clerks or anything like that. Let the people wait; they don't care. This is true in Russia today even.

What was the lighting like?

Very dim, very poor lighting. Little fifteen-watt bulbs in the hotel rooms and, of course, we weren't in many hotel rooms because we were in the coach. But in the stores you'd wonder how they wouldn't go blind trying to see. Very few cars on the street, extremely few-. Everybody walking, everybody taking some type of public conveyance whether it be streetcars or buses or bicycles.

Of course, we went on through Czechoslovakia and dropped down into Hungary. We had no trouble crossing the border here. It was the normal routine, took half, three quarters of an hour to get across, and into Budapest. In Budapest we stayed on the Danube River, the beautiful Danube. We just found a park there. Of course, as I say, there's no camping places, so we didn't know where to stay, and so we found this area on the Danube. It was a nice place, and we parked there. For the first, and I believe only time in all our travels, we were there for a couple of days, and the police came and told us we had to move. We didn't argue with them, I can tell you that; we just moved on and parked somewhere else, weren't bothered any more.

We saw all the things there were to see in Budapest, of course—many monuments and churches and the like. And then we crossed from Hungary into Rumania. Here's where we really ran into trouble crossing the border. We came up to the border, and six men came onto the coach as if they were raiding it. They demanded our passports, took our passports,

and disappeared into a building. Flora had been ill for a couple of days with a bad cold, and she was in bed in the rear compartment of the coach.. And of course, on this trip, as all the other trips, Jim Alspaugh was driving the coach, and Susano Lopez came along as our cook boy. Finally, all six men came back to the coach; I demanded that they get me somebody who spoke English. They were brusque, mean, nasty; and they were pulling drawers open and everything like that. Finally I just made them stop all that, and I said they *must* find somebody that spoke English. So finally they left and came back with a girl who spoke English, and I explained that I'd be glad to open anything that they wanted open, but I would do the opening and they could do the looking.

Underneath the davenport which made into beds, were a great amount of stores, things that we had purchased in Austria and Germany, canned goods and various things. They went through this with a fine-tooth comb, and took each can and shook it, apparently looking for ammunition. They wanted to know if we had any firearms. So then they wanted to know where Flora was because they could account for the three of us, but they couldn't account for her; they had her passport. So I showed them in the back that she was sick in bed. They angrily demanded that she get out of bed, through the interpreter, and forced her to get up. And then under this particular bed, again, there were canned goods and sleeping bags stored. They went through *everything* there extremely thoroughly because I think they thought that she was just playing sick and was hiding something. They took the sleeping bags, opened them up, took them outside, laid them on the ground, felt all through them, wouldn't even repack 'em up; we had to do this ourselves. They drove the coach over a

pit and big searchlights underneath it, looked all underneath the coach, made us open the engine, all the undercompartments. We were two and a half, three hours getting across the border from Hungary into Rumania.

At what point was that on the border?

Well, it's near Oradea; I don't know exactly what the border town is (maybe that was it), but it would have been a little village—little border crossing station right on the border. This town of Oradea is six, seven miles inside Rumania. We drove down through Ploesti. This is where the huge oil fields were in which there was a lot of bombing done during the war, and into Bucharest. Bucharest is a very huge city. Again, the same condition existing as did in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The same problems shopping, the same drabness everywhere.

We had wanted to go down into Bulgaria, but I heard along the way that there were considerable problems in Bulgaria at the time, quite a bit of unrest, so we decided not to do that. We cut back and went down into Yugoslavia. And, of course, our first point was into Belgrade. And Belgrade is actually at the confluence of the Danube and the Sava River. Of course, in Belgrade there's museums and art galleries and various things which we went to, and then we drove down through Yugoslavia through towns of Sarajevo and Mostar and into the coast town of Metkovic. This is on the Dalmatian coast, actually on the Adriatic Sea. From there we went south thirty, forty miles to Dubrovnik. This is quite a famous resort on the Dalmatian coast, and they've managed to preserve the sixteenth century atmosphere of the whole area. And they have an enormous number of days of sunshine, so it's a very popular resort area.

The old town of Dubrovnik is completely encircled by high walls with very huge guard towers with no cars allowed inside these walls. This is the old walled city of Dubrovnik, extremely interesting to visit and wander and roam around through.

Then we made the beautiful drive on up the Dalmatian coast; the road goes right along the sea, the Adriatic Sea, all the way up. You go through the town of Split, and another town, Rijeka, and into the border town of Trieste, which of course is in Italy. Then we worked our way back up to Munich and stored the coach in Munich.

We returned again in 1967 and started out in Munich. Munich, incidentally, we fell in love with Munich, and each time, of course, when we'd finish a trip or start a trip there we'd spend quite a few days shopping and visiting various things in Munich. We went up through Innsbruck into Liechtenstein, and then on into Switzerland, and through Berne, Lausanne and into Geneva. Somewhere in Switzerland (and I can't remember just where it was; it might have been in Geneva), we saw a very famous circus.

We then went on into Germany, to Heidelberg, into Frankfurt. Frankfurt, of course, is a super interesting city, and we enjoyed that a great deal. We were in Luxemburg, then on into Brussels in Belgium. And then into the Netherlands to Rotterdam and The Hague and on into Amsterdam. This was in '67, and then later on in '67, we decided to go on up and do the—Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. We picked the coach up again in Amsterdam. We had an excellent place to store the coach there; it was in a garage. The gentleman that owned the garage was very accommodating and helpful to us in many ways.

I won't go into a lot of detail on this particular trip. We went into Stockholm, of

course, and Denmark. We were in Sweden at the time that they switched over from left-hand drive to right-hand drive. This was a big event for Sweden. It was a very complicated thing. They'd been working on this for five, six years. It cost about sixteen to twenty million dollars to make the change, and we were actually there on the first day of the change. Everything went very smoothly, and people finally found they could drive on the right-hand side of the road just as easily as they could on the left.

In Copenhagen, of course, we visited Tivoli Gardens. I love Tivoli Gardens; that's the Disneyland of Europe, really. It may have been where Disney got his idea for Disneyland because it's much lower-key place than Disneyland, but it's very beautifully done. They have a lot of free acts; they have a lot of games of chance. They actually have some slot machines operating in Tivoli Gardens in sortie places. Lots of extremely fine restaurants. It's beautifully lighted and decorated at night. It's just like a fairy story; it's a beautiful, beautiful place.

We went up to Oslo in Norway, back over to Stockholm, and then we flew over to Helsinki, Finland, flew over one day and visited there, stayed overnight, then came back, and drove the coach back down to Amsterdam and back into storage in the same garage.

Of course, the two great trips that we had with the coach—they were all great—but really the two outstanding ones was our first trip to Africa with the four children and then the trip from Amsterdam to New Delhi, India, which we did in 1968, from September fifteenth to December first, seventy days, ten thousand miles. I had this trip in my mind for several years, and I'd done a lot of research on it, and really I couldn't get too much information about the roads and all, - particularly through

Turkey and Iran and all that. Finally, I got enough information on Greece and Turkey to be sure we were all right, but Iran was still a big question. So in—I forget just what the date was, but prior to the trip, I had heard about a trip that was done by a company called the *Indiaman*. This was a bus trip from London to New Delhi. So I wrote to them and got information on it, and it happened that the route that they took was practically the same route that I had tentatively laid out for our trip. The big question was whether we could cross Iran with the coach without any problem, especially the Great Sand Desert in southern Iran.

Well I wrote different places, different people, and everywhere I got a different answer: we could, we couldn't. And so finally I decided to go on the *Indiaman* trip, or part of it, I should say, from Tehran to Quetta, Pakistan. This involved twelve days. I met the *Indiaman* bus in Tehran, and we drove down through Isfahan and went down to Persepolis, then backtracked and went across what they call the Great Sand Desert into Quetta, West Pakistan. A great amount of these roads were unpaved and quite a few of them washboardy and lots of them with drifted sand. This would cause the greatest trouble I found out, that if they had big sand storms many times the road was closed for two or three days till they got the sand cleared away from the road. However, in going across in the *Indiaman* we didn't have any trouble, and we didn't in the coach either.

Incidentally, this *Indiaman* trip was a very interesting trip. I'd certainly recommend it to anybody that wanted a real adventure to do this trip from London to New Delhi. There are quite a few people—quite a few companies that make this trip today. You stay in very cheap hotels, sleep out quite a bit of the time (you have your own sleeping bag; you sleep on

cots), you cook a lot of your own meals. They had gas stoves, and we'd buy provisions along the way and cook meals. On this trip that I was on, an American family—a professor who was on sabbatical for a year was taking his family on into India, and they kind of took me in, and I ate most of my meals with them. Lunch, you'd generally just shop at the stop and buy some cheese and yoghurt and fresh fruits and sort of eat along the way. It was a super interesting trip for me and actually a trip I wouldn't mind doing again myself. We made lots of preparations for the trip. I had been on a hunting trip into India in the meantime, and I had made arrangements for a guide to meet us at the border of India. His name was Mr. O. P. Sharda. He later on traveled with us actually on the coach in India and became a very good personal friend of ours; he was an excellent guide and a fine gentleman. So we started our trip on September fifteenth, started out from Amsterdam and went down to Frankfurt and into a town called Wildflecken. We went to Wildflecken and stayed three days; this was, because our daughter Joanne, our youngest daughter, was living there at the time, had been married, and her husband was in the Army at Wildflecken. We had a nice visit with her and then went on to Munich to be there for the Oktoberfest. Incidentally, I forgot to mention that on this particular trip George Fry and Mary Kay, our oldest daughter, and Judy, our number two daughter who was not married at the time, went along with us. The Oktoberfest was, of course, a great thing to see, and the family enjoyed that immensely.

We went from Munich to Venice, Venice down to Florence, and Judy got to visit a lot of her old haunts. From Florence we went into Siena. This is the area where Chianti wine is famous; it's where most of it all comes from, this general area. Judy had met at Gonzaga in Spokane an Italian young man who was going

to school there who was from Siena. So, he had insisted that we visit him in Siena, and we spent a couple days there, and the family was super gracious to us in every way. They had us to dinner, they had us to a picnic; the name of this family was Falassi, and Judy's friend's name was Allesandro. He showed us everything there was to see in Siena, and we truly had a wonderful time with these people. Then we went on to Rome. Of course, this was the first time that George had had a chance to see Rome. Judy and Mary Kay had been to Rome before. We worked our way down into San Giovanni Rotondo which was the home of the famous priest Padre Pio who has the stigmata of Christ on his hands and feet and on his chest. He has since died.

From there we went down to Brindisi, which is clear down at the tip of Italy. Here we put the coach on a ferry and took it across to Patras, Greece. We spent almost two weeks in Greece. Of course, we were in Sparta; we were in Olympia. We were naturally at Delphi and Athens. We saw just about everything there was to see in Greece that we could do in two weeks. Of course, the highlight was the Acropolis, and the Parthenon there, and all of the famous temples, the Temple of Zeus, and the Temple of Hethaestos. We did a great amount of sightseeing in Athens and all of the surrounding areas down to the southern island of Peloponnese. And, Delphi, the famous oracle at Delphi. George and Mary Kay left us at Greece, as they had two children at home at that time so they flew on home, and Judy continued on the trip..

We went up through Greece to Thessalonica and across from Thessalonica to Istanbul. We visited all the famous mosques and temples in Istanbul, and of course the fabulous covered market in Istanbul. Here we picked up a guide who stayed with us for about a week because we were going to go

down the coast down to Izmir and to Bursa. All of these towns had various interesting things to see.

Driving back across from Goreme to Ankara, we had one of our first big problems. At this point we were towing the Land Rover behind us, and we crossed a bridge, a concrete bridge, and on the far end of the bridge the pavement was just about one foot below the level of the bridge. Naturally it jarred the dickens out of the coach, and Jim let a screech out of him because he could see the Land Rover in the rearview mirror taking off on the side of the road. The Land Rover piled up on about the only pile of big rocks that there was in the whole area and completely tore the front end up,

He drove the truck with the Land Rover in it on into Ankara and we went in the coach. This was about a hundred and some miles from Ankara. The Land Rover was in bad condition. The transmission was all gone, the radiator was all torn to pieces, the steering mechanism was all gone. So, I had made up my mind what I'd do, would just sell the Land Rover and get along without one for the rest of the trip because I didn't want to keep it in this condition even if it were repaired. So, the guide, of course, was with us and we found out right away that there was no way that I could sell the Land Rover. The Land Rover was on a *came de passage*, which I've explained before. It could not be left in the country; it had to be taken out of the country. I could not be sold; it could not be given away. I found this out finally by going to the customs people and talking at length with them. And I wanted to give it to a church, a school or something like that. They said absolutely no; it had to go out of the country; even if it had to be trucked out, it *had* to be taken out of the country.

So then I asked them at the customs office, where in the world would I get this repaired.

So they gave me the name of a man by the name of Abdul something—I forget his last name. I checked around two, three other places and everybody told me about this man Abdul. So we went to see Abdul. In fact, we got the Land Rover over to his shop, so he said he would look it over and he'd come that night to the coach and tell us how much it would take to fix it. He said that he could secure all the parts; there were many second-hand auto part stores in Turkey at that time—I suppose still are—and he could secure all the necessary parts to repair it, and he'd let us know that night.

He came to the coach and told us in detail how he was going to repair it, what he was gonna do, where he was gonna get the parts, but never any mention about any money. So I'm thinking all the time, "Ah-ha, I wonder how we're going to handle this? I'm not about to pay for this whole job at this point. Maybe I'll—." In fact, I made up my mind that I would pay not more than half. So finally he didn't come up with anything, and I finally said, "Abdul, how much is this gonna cost?"

So, as I remember it, it was a little over a thousand dollars, which was extremely cheap for the amount of work that had to be done. And I said, "Well now how do you want us to pay for this?"

And he said, "Well," he said, "you or somebody's going to have to take the Land Rover to India because it has to be taken out of the country. So, what you do," he said, "if anything happens to the Land Rover between here and the border of Iran, I'll come and fix it myself. If anything happens between the border and India that you think is my fault, you take it off my bill and you pay me when you get the Land Rover to India." Well, I was just dumbfounded at this story. So, without giving him a single dime, we left the Land Rover with him and went on our trip.

I think at this time I'll tell about going and picking up the Land Rover later on. That winter I got word from him that the Land Rover was finished, and up to this time I had done quite a bit of work even with our Senators in Washington trying to figure some way that I could have the Land Rover driven through to India without my having to do it. It ended up that there was no way to do it. It was on my passport; I was the one that had to drive the Land Rover through, and it had to be taken out of the country. And nobody else could take it out.

So I flew to Ankara and checked with various people as to where I could find somebody to go with me because this was pretty rough country that I was going to have to drive through. We were going to go through—clear through the north of Turkey, and it was wintertime. And so somebody suggested I go talk to the people at USAID [United States Agency for International Development]. I went there and found a driver who had been with USAID for twenty years, who was willing to make the trip with me. We made arrangements for his salary to help—go with me and all that. So I spent a few days then gathering heavy clothes and making preparations to make this trip through northern Turkey where it was gonna be very, very cold. We started out and drove the Land Rover—.

Incidentally, when I went to pick it up, the Land Rover, it was in perfect shape. I took it out and drove it in very rough ground, over rough roads right out into the bush, and the steering was perfect. He had done an absolute top job. So I told him, "Well Abdul, I'm satisfied, I'm going to go ahead and pay you."

And he said, "No! You don't pay me until you get it to India." He said, "That was our agreement."

And I said, “Well, I’m not going to worry about getting a check back to you from India. I’m happy with the Land Rover now,” so I went ahead and paid him.

So we drove it through northern Turkey, going north up to Samsun, which is on the Black Sea, cross[ed] over to Trabzon, and then drop[ped] down through Erzurum and into Iran. It was so cold in some of the little hotels that we stayed in that a glass of water would freeze in the room at night. We had no mishaps all the way along the line. This chap that went along with me from USAID was a good driver and a very fine gentleman, lived up to everything he said he’d do. So we just drove it right on through and on into India.

I remember one interesting thing that happened one night. We were in this little hotel. They had stoves in the hallways, and there’d be a little sitting area out in the hallways. One night there was a whole bunch of real rough, tough lookin’ characters sitting around, and every once in a while they’d go to the phone. The phone’d ring and they’d talk on the phone and come back and they’d be all happy. And so this chap that was with me, of course, he could understand what was goin’ on; they were all smugglers. They were smuggling sheep from Turkey into Iran, and the telephone calls were that their sheep got across the border.

Now to go back to our coach trip. We were in Ankara with the coach, and then we took a little different route across Turkey than we did with the Land Rover because the coach couldn’t have gone the northern route. We entered Iran at a town called Gubulak, then came down through Tabriz, Tabriz to Zenjan, and from Zenjan into Teheran. We spent three days in Teheran. And incidentally, that was about the one and only caravan park that we had from the time that we left Italy. In Europe there are quite a few caravan parks, but there

are none in the rest of the country. There was a nice one at Teheran. We did stay there.

In Teheran, of course, we saw the crown jewels and the big mosques and all that, and then drove down to Isfahan, a most interesting city. It’s the home of the famous Blue Mosque, and one of the most interesting markets that I’ve encountered anywhere, and I’ve been in markets all over the world. The thing that sets this different from most markets is that each of the individual stalls, they’re actually manufacturing and making the items that they’re selling, whether it’s brass work or gold jewelry or silver jewelry or leather goods or fur pieces; anything you can think of is being made in Isfahan in this big market.

We’re talking about the market in Isfahan, I forgot to mention that while we were in Teheran we bargained for a couple days and finally bought a beautiful Persian carpet. It’s a Nian. We visited—naturally watched them making carpets—all the children making them. This has since *supposedly* been done away with, but I kinda doubt that it has because most of these carpets are made, actually, in the homes, way out in little villages; and I don’t believe they’ve completely stopped the children from working on them. The reason that they use the children is because their fingers are small enough and they can get a tighter weave on the carpet, which makes them, naturally, way more valuable. We saw lots of carpets being made.

In Isfahan we parked right alongside the famous Shah Abbas Hotel. This hotel is owned by the government insurance agency, and is probably one of the most beautiful hotels that I’ve ever been in. We took a room there because they were so nice in allowing us to park right alongside it. And we were in Isfahan for three days. We thoroughly enjoyed every bit of what we saw in Isfahan.

We then went down to Persepolis. Persepolis was built by King Darius. This is King Darius the First. And Persepolis is the ancient capital of the whole Persian empire, and of course, it now lies in ruins. At one time King Darius ruled everything from the Indus River in India clear over into the Mediterranean, and way up north into Europe. He ruled all of this country. There are great friezes in Persepolis which you can see where the various rulers of all the different countries that he ruled—it shows them coming to bring tribute to him in the form of gold and silver jewels and everything of this nature all over the years. Once a year they had to come and pay tribute to him.

Alexander the Great came through this country and captured Persepolis about 331 B.C. Actually King Darius became King Darius the First in 521 B.C., and then there were several Darius kings after him. But Alexander the Great captured this area and they claim that it took ten thousand camels to haul the loot away from Persepolis.

We parked our coach right at the entrance to Persepolis with no problems whatsoever, stayed overnight, and then went on—drove down to Shiraz which is down south of Persepolis. Then we came back up north a short distance and we started east, across the Great Sand Desert of Iran. And we thought we'd have some problems along this road because of the sand and everything, but we never did. It was a rather interesting thing—the only problem we had, we came to one hill which was SO steep we just couldn't pull it. So, we backed down to a level spot and a wider spot in the road. Of course the roads there are all quite narrow, [and we were] wondering just what in the world we were going to do, and lo and behold, who came along but the *Indiaman*, another trip of the *Indiaman* of the

same trip that I had been on, with, believe it or not, the same driver!

So, he had a German-made bus that had extremely low gear in it, so we just tied a chain from his bus to our bus, and he helped us up over the hill. It just needed a little additional help to get on over. But it was another one of those funny things where the Good Lord seemed to be with us, and we hadn't been waiting there wondering what to do over fifteen, twenty minutes till along comes the *Indiaman* bus. He thought it was great that he had to help us up and get us over the hill.

Then we crossed, of course, into West Pakistan into a town called Quetta. There wasn't much to see in Quetta. We then drove up to Kandahar in Afghanistan. And incidentally, this is a very funny thing—going into Afghanistan at the border there was just a little shack of a building at the border where you got your passport stamped. I took the passports all in, and this fellow was looking at my passport. I noticed that he had it upside down, turning page by page by page. So I reached over and corrected him; I turned it back up so it was right side up. He looked up at me in disgust and turned it back and continued to turn page by page upside down.

Also, we had gone to great trouble to get visas for everybody going into Afghanistan, and these were big, eight-byfourteen-inch sheets of paper with all kinds of numerous details on 'em, stamps, photos, and everything by the Afghanistan consul in the United States. He took these out of each passport, crumpled them up and threw them over in a corner along with three, four hundred more of them. And finally why he—after looking at my passport upside down, he never did look at the rest of them. He just took and stamped all of them and let us go on our way.

That night we drove into Kandahar and stayed—I forget where we stayed there in

Kandahar, but between Kandahar and Kabul. We stayed right out on the highlands just off the side of the road, and all night long there were camel trains passing us. And, actually I believe we felt safer than if we had been parked on a highway in the United States today. We spent three days in Kabul. Of course that's the capital of Afghanistan. It's a very interesting city. It's a very dirty city, very unhealthy city. We found that there was only one place to eat there, and this was a restaurant which had been opened by a chef who had been working for the Morrison-Knudsen Construction Company. Morrison-Knudsen Construction Company known as "MK" has done work all over the world, and their head offices are in Boise, Idaho, where we were originally from. He had opened this restaurant; it had a beautiful tile kitchen, very plain restaurant, but it had its own well, and was considered an absolutely safe place to eat, so we ate a few meals in this particular restaurant and never had any trouble. We were warned against eating in any of the other restaurants in town.

Incidentally, we never had any problem with our water or getting sick. Of course the water was purified with this ultraviolet ray arrangement. I'm often asked how we handled the sump tanks. This was a very simple arrangement. When we wanted to empty it, why, we'd simply drive along off—clear off to the side of the road in a farming area or where there was a ditch of some type, and turned on the electric valve which opened it and dumped the contents. Of course everything was chemically treated in the swap tank. We'd pick up water wherever we could, which sometimes became a problem because not all service stations had water, so we'd have to find water at a hotel or someplace where it was under pressure.

Diesel fuel was never any problem at all because every service station in all of these

countries carried diesel. This is because there are so many diesel vehicles.

Leaving Kabul we went up, of course, and over the fabulous Khyber Pass. And the most interesting thing here was just outside of or right in the area of the Khyber Pass is a no-man'sland and the little village town called Londikotal (or might be -c-o-t-a-l). Londikotal—you can't even find it on a map. This is a no-man's-land, and I don't exactly know the history of it, but it's under no government whatsoever, at that time—believe it still is. Everybody on the street was carrying a rifle over their shoulder. The market is in a cave, part of it's in a cave, huge cave down—sort of under the town. And most of the merchandise in Londikotal that's for sale is some merchandise that's been hijacked around different parts of the country. The particular time that we were there, every shop had beautiful wool shawls made in Switzerland with beautiful embroidery on them. They were costing us about four or five dollars a piece. These shawls would be worth thirty or five dollars today.

But *every* kind of merchandise you can think of was for sale in this town of Londikotal in the market. And busloads of people were coming in from Pakistan and India to load, up on things that they could buy there. It really gave you kind of a weird feeling to see everybody carrying rifles, and I guess this was their only protection, because I don't suppose there was any police or any government of any kind there.

We then went over the Khyber Pass through the Hindu Kush mountains dropping down, of course, into West Pakistan. We were in Jalabad and Peshawar and then down into Rawalpindi and to the capital of West Pakistan, Lahore. From Lahore we went over to a town which is right on the border called Ferozepore. Here we met Sharda, who was

right there waiting for us, who was to be our guide. And then he stayed with us on down into New Delhi.

We were in Hardwar, which is a very holy place on the Ganges, and then we drove from Hardwar to Saranpur, which is a little tiny town which was where the gentleman that had taken me tiger hunting a couple times lived. He was a maharaja and he lived in a place called The Fort, and that's what it was; it had thirteen-foot-high walls completely all around it. He had made arrangements and this had been done before we came, as a place to store the coach. It was stored in the billiard parlor of the guest house of this palace. He had cut a thirteen-foot-high door into this billiard parlor, put in a steel rolling door, and we simply drove the coach in and closed the door, and the customs met us there and sealed the lock, so it couldn't be taken out.

This particular trip, because Judy was with us and Flora had never, of course, been to Delhi before—I had been because I'd been there on hunts—we had made arrangements to go on down to Agra to see the famous Taj Mahal. This is, to me, probably the greatest sight in all my travels—the Taj Mahal. It took twenty thousand workmen, or I should say slaves, twenty-two years to build. They brought craftsmen in from all over the world to do the fantastic carving that is done on the marble and all the beautiful inlaid work that is done in the marble. The whole Taj Mahal is constructed of marble. It is considered the most architecturally perfect building in the world. The four minarets or towers which are on each corner of the main Taj Mahal grounds, or building I should say, are so constructed that they lean outwards from the main building so in the event of an earthquake they would not fall on the Taj Mahal itself. I'll go into more detail on the Taj Mahal when I get into going into some of our travels in

India when we actually traveled India with the coach.

After seeing the Taj Mahal, we stayed overnight and then returned to Delhi and flew on home, so that ended our seventyday Amsterdam to New Delhi trip which was probably the greatest trip that we made with the coach, by far the most interesting, because we went through so many different countries, so many different cultures, and made it without any big problems other than really little problem we had with the Land Rover.

*You flew from Delhi back to San Francisco?
Did you fly to the east or did you go back west?*

No, we came back through Japan.

So really you circumnavigated the earth on—

Yes, on that particular trip.

I'd Like to make one correction here. I think that in discussing—when we were at Persepolis in Iran that I mentioned, that Alexander the Great had conquered King Darius's empire, and I mentioned that in saying that his empire ran from the Indus River in India over to Egypt and clear up into— way up into Europe, up to the Black Sea, I indicated it was Darius the First whose empire ran that far, but it's not Darius; it was actually Alexander the Great.

Incidentally, we might add that Alexander the Great was only thirty-four when he died. He died in 323 B.C., and he was one of the great remarkable men of history. He led his armies almost to the end of what was then the civilized world, and he brought Christian religion into all the areas that he Conquered.

In order to make the trip to India, we had a most difficult time with the government of India due to the fact that they have a law which says that you can't leave a vehicle inside

India for longer than six months. I was on a hunting trip up in northern India. This was after we had made the trip from Amsterdam to New Delhi, so I spent some time in Delhi trying to get this situation straightened out with the government. We worked through the automobile association; we went to everybody—finally, even got clear up to the minister of the treasury department, and this was due to the fact that the customs department came under his jurisdiction, and this law—this six-months law—came under him.

He wanted us to drive the coach out of India into, say, Nepal and back in again; then you could keep it for another six months. The problem was that we had to leave it there for thirteen months between the time that we arrived in Delhi or into India—from the time we entered India off the Amsterdam to New Delhi trip in '68, we were not going to tour India till January of 1970. To make a long story short, we hounded this director of the treasury in New Delhi. One time he made me wait four hours for a meeting with him, and finally he agreed and gave us special permission to leave the coach stored at my friend's—Giri Raj Singh's home in Saranpur. This was where the coach was stored in the billiard room of the guest house. He insisted that the special custom seals be put on the padlocks of the door, so that the coach couldn't be removed, and on the doors of the coach. We had to pay for bringing a customs man from the nearest town to have that done. This minister of finance told, us this was the first time that this had ever been done—that anyone had ever been allowed to leave a vehicle inside India over six months.

But anyway we got it accomplished. So we came back in January of 1970, Flora and I and Father Doyle, Father John Doyle who had been—you'll remember I spoke of him

before—he was on the African trip with us, and I had written him to see if he'd like to make this India trip with us. He was in the United States at the time on leave from South Africa and was very happy to take the opportunity to travel in India. Also, in the meantime our very dear friend Susano Lopez, died of cancer. So, John Ascuaga was good enough to let me take Don Wai with us, Don Wai was the chef for Trader Dick's, and he went along with us as cook in India. This was extremely important in India because we had to cook nearly all of our meals on the coach. The only places that we could eat out would be in New Delhi and Bombay and Calcutta. It would be an impossibility to eat in any of the villages or any of the smaller hotels.

We started the trip and a rather interesting thing happened: driving down from where the coach was stored (it was about a hundred miles north of New Delhi), Jim kept complaining that the coach just didn't seem to have power, didn't seem to have power. So when we got to New Delhi, why Sharda, the guide that was gonna be with us all the time, had arranged for us to stay at the New Delhi residence—I should say, on the grounds of the New Delhi residence of the government of the state of Rajasthan. This was a place where, if the governor of Rajasthan came to New Delhi, why he could stay there. He—Sharda had made arrangements for us to stay inside this compound which had a big high fence that went around the whole area where this governor's home was. It was very convenient because it was right downtown New Delhi, and we were protected from the people and from the crowds.

So Jim worked on the coach there, and he just never seemed to find what he thought was the trouble. We started out on our trip—we got everything ready to go, and we got out of town a little ways and finally I said to Jim, I

said, "This just isn't right." I said, "We've got to go back and get this working."

So, there was a representative of General Motors in New Delhi of the particular engine that we had. So we had them come out to help us. To make a long story short, they kept checking it, and finally decided it was the fuel injectors. Well, we had a spare set of fuel injectors so we installed those; we still had the same trouble. So, the engine, of course, is in the rear of the coach, and the mechanic that we had was back there. Jim was up in front revving it up, revving up the engine; and the mechanic revved it up from the back and realized that it would rev up farther than what it did when Jim was doing it from using the diesel pedal.

So, lo and behold we started checking that out and underneath the driver's seat on the coach is a little, small compartment where we kept chains, spark plug sets, and so forth. We kept spark plugs for the generator, various parts to the engine and oil and oil filters, and we checked that—we got in underneath there and checked it, and one of the cartons containing an oil filter had slipped down under the linkage from the accelerator and was not allowing it to open clear full. So we simply removed the oil cartridge carton and our problem was solved. Needless to say, my face was red and Jim's face was red, and the mechanic's face was red. But anyway, we were in fine shape for the rest [of] the trip.

The chef at the Intercontinental Hotel in New Delhi was extremely kind to us. He was a German chef, and he sold us quite a quantity of meat and many fresh vegetables and pastries and bread to start our trip out with. He also had a chemical to wash all our vegetables with, which he advised very strongly that we use; the Intercontinental Hotel in Delhi washes all their vegetables with a chemical—I can't remember the name

of it—promalganate something—I don't remember the name.

We left New Delhi and drove down to Agra. This, of course, is the home of the Taj Mahal, and this now was my—about my third time to see the Taj Mahal and would be Flora's second time, Father Doyle's first time. I would never go back to India at any time without going to see the Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal is considered one of the world's most beautiful and costly tombs; it was built by the Indian ruler, Shah Jahan, in memory of his favorite wife, Mumtaz-Mahal. (Incidentally, this means "pride of the palace.") She was his favorite wife, and I think she died in the birth of her thirteenth child. The Taj Mahal is in Agra which is, oh, a hundred and some miles south of New Delhi and it was built between 1632 and 1653. Twenty thousand men took twenty-two years to build it. It's built of white marble, and the enormous amount of the marble is carved and inlaid with special jewels of various types. All that it contains, of course, is [the] tomb of the wife of the Shah Jahan, and later on he was entombed there himself. It's considered—I think I mentioned before—it's considered the most architecturally perfect building in the world. The building itself is 186 feet square.

From there we went down to Jaipur. Jaipur is what they call the Pink City. This is because of the fact that it's built with a stone that has a pink hue to it; it's the capital of the state of Rajasthan. And, the Amber Palace is a rather interesting place. It's a huge place which used to be where the maharajas lived, and it has a great grillwork in various places on it, so that the women could view parades and special performances without the public seeing them.

In Jaipur we stayed at the Rambagh Palace. We didn't actually stay inside the palace; we parked in the grounds of the palace. And this used to be a maharaja's palace. It had been

turned into a hotel. A rather interesting thing happened— one day we were sort of waiting to get ready to leave and Father Doyle was walking in the gardens of this palace, saying his office, and I knew he was out there and then I couldn't see him. And then I looked for him and he was standing down— quite a ways away talking to somebody. He came back with his face almost white, like he was scared to death. And I said, "What in the world's wrong with you?"

Well, he said, "I just had my fortune told by this man down here, and," he said, "he told me things that there's nobody else in the world would know. He told me my mother's name. He told me first off that I was a priest, and," he said, he had no way of knowing that I was a priest. He told me where I was from," and there had been no discussion of anything like this around—we hadn't seen anybody or talked to anybody.

So Flora got interested in this, and she says, "Well, I got to go see this fella." So [laughing] I said, "Well this is a bunch of hooey."

So she went down and talked to him, and lo and behold, he told Flora her mother's first name was Gabina, wrote it out on a piece of paper, put it in her hand and had her hold it, and then told her what the name was, and she opened her hand and the name was written on the piece of paper. Flora's a firm believer, and I still think there's some hanky-panky to it somewhere. But anyway, it was interesting.

You never had your fortune told?

No. About that time we were ready to leave, so we took off. He told Flora that she was gonna live to be a hundred and six and have twenty-two grandchildren. I think he's a little bit off on the grandchildren, but she might live to be a hundred and six.

In Jaipur you ride up to one of the palaces on elephants; they have a bunch of elephants there to take the tourists up. Then we go down to Udaipur which is located on Lake Pichola. And we went out and had lunch at the Lake Palace Hotel. This is a maharaja's palace that is located right on an island in the middle of the lake.

We drove down from Udaipur down to the town of Ahmedabad. The reason I mention Ahmedabad is that Don Wai was ill here. I found out that he hadn't had a bowel movement for five days, and he hadn't said anything about it. So, of course he was naturally having quite a few pains and all. So we called a doctor, and this was an English-speaking doctor, spoke excellent English. He came to the guest house that we were staying at, examined him, and he listened to his chest and listened to his stomach. His diagnosis was—he turned to me and he said, "There is definitely some mischief going on in there!"

And I'd like to have said, "Well, that's the understatement of the world."

But anyway, he said that he should go to the hospital. So they—we called an ambulance. Well, it would almost make a person sick to see the ambulance—they didn't even have any blankets; they had nothing and an old—dirty old cot. We got him to the hospital, and took him in to where the examining area was, and this doctor was still with us. And here in no time at all there were six or seven doctors examining poor Don. Turns out they were all interns, and they were all taking a poke at him here and there to find out what was wrong with him.

So finally they said the only room they had was in the maternity section of the hospital. They wheeled him on a dirty old gurney cart across cobblestones shakin' the dickens out of him clear across over in another section of the hospital and got him into a room and finally

got him taken care of and got him comfortable. And, the next day, why, they decided that a surgeon ought to talk to him. By the next day, Don said he felt so good that he just thought he ought to go home, and so he talked the surgeon out of even examining him, and we took him home. This hospital was something else. In an Indian hospital all the relatives come and stay on the grounds or in the halls or wherever they can camp while their relation is in the hospital. They had a roofed-over area with just columns, no walls, a great big area where people could sleep so they'd be in out of the rain, also where they could cook food for their relations in the hospital.

Don needed some medication, some various things that we had to get for him. The hospital didn't furnish them; they told us to go across the street to the chemist. This would be the drugstore; they always call it a chemist over there. So we had to go out, buy the things that was needed and bring it back. Chipmunks were running in and out of the rooms, picking up pieces of cotton that had been thrown under the beds, taking it out to make nests. Well, I'll tell you, I took Flora in to see Don, and she almost got sick walkin' through the halls of the hospital because there were people asleep in the halls, relatives sleeping all over. You'd have to walk all around them. It was a sight to behold. This was a town of five hundred thousand people. It just was an education in itself to see it.

Well anyway, Don got all right, and we got him out of there and went on our way. Our next main stop was Bombay, which is the largest city in India. I don't know what the population of Bombay would be—ten million, I guess. Incidentally, India now has a population of about—of six hundred million, and it increases at the rate of a million a month. You start multiplying this up, and you just wonder where it's going to end.

Bombay is a gigantic, huge, bustling city with lots of poverty, an enormous number of people sleeping on the streets at night, lots of areas where little shacks have gone up made out of old crates and cardboard. It's really something that sort of gets to you to see the poverty within these cities. The biggest problem, really, in India today is that the minute that a person, let's say, who has been a villager all his life or his family's been a villager—he's been a farmer, he gets enough education to get a—maybe just a high school education or part of a high school education, and he gets a fountain pen in his pocket, he don't want to be a farmer any more; it's beyond him and beneath him to be a farmer. He's now graded up and he wants to live in the city. So he moves to the city, and there just simply are not enough jobs for partially educated people or even well-educated people in the city. A huge, big problem that's coming to India in the next ten, fifteen years is gonna be this: the fact that more people are being educated. One of the biggest things that I think is a big mistake that's being done right now and the United States is taking part in it, is that they have a huge educational system set up to beam educational programs into every village of India by satellite. This will be direct reception by satellite, not by cable, that the satellite will beam the television programs into hundreds and thousands of villages. Each village will have one or two, maybe three television sets. They're going to try to mass educate six hundred million people in a matter of eight, ten, twelve, fifteen, twenty years. What are these people gonna do? There isn't gonna be anything for them to do. It's gonna take them off the farm because the minute the person is upgraded a little bit, he will not do the work that he did before. This is due to the ingrained belief in the caste system. A good example of this is that Sharda, our guide, who

was a tremendous person, would no more think of carrying his bags into a hotel or into a guest house; he'd wait for two hours to find a "bearer," as they call them, to carry those bags. Sometimes in the mornings when we'd get ready to leave, he'd be around. I'd say, "Let's get goin'."

"Well, I haven't got my bags."

"Well, go get 'em!"

He'd say, "No, I've got to wait for the bearer."

Two, three times I went personally and got Sharda's bags because he wouldn't carry them. This was beneath him to carry his bags. He was beyond that; he was a guide. He was too good to carry his bags. There's no way I could change his mind to that. This is what's gonna happen in India if they mass educate all these people. They're all gonna move off the farm; they're gonna move into the cities and there's not gonna be work for them and God only knows what'll happen.

In Bombay did you see much evidence of the British rule?

Well, not only in Bombay, but all through India you see evidence of the British rule. Of course, the government's patterned after what the British set up. The British set up all of the irrigation system, all of the electrical systems, the complete form of government, all of the rest houses that we stayed in—these were built all over India for government employees to stay in because there were no hotels. The reason we stayed in them was that we could park our coach inside a guest house and it would be inside a high wall. You were inside a compound so that you were protected; it might be right in the center of town, but still you were protected from the mobs of people. The British built all of this. The British did

unbelievable things for India. Maybe they didn't do them all right, but they did a great deal, I'll tell you, for India. And, the banking systems are all the same—all patterned after Great Britain's systems. You name it, it's patterned after Great Britain.

Outside of these large cities of India, did the countryside seem crowded?

Well, of course, naturally the farm areas [aren't] going to seem crowded until you come to a village. The minute you come to a village, no matter what size the village is, it's crowded. You just have to creep through it with the coach because of the enormous number of people. Goats, cows—sacred cows—bicycles, pedicabs, every form of transportation you could think of, plus the hundreds of people walking, thousands of people. We would never stop to have lunch inside a city or inside a village. We would stop way out in a farming area, and we often used to make a bet as to how many people would be around the coach in thirty minutes. When we would park, we would see nobody. In thirty minutes there would be forty or fifty people standing around the coach. Some of them would come by on a bicycle; some would come by on a bullock cart. They would pull off the road, stop and look. They never caused any trouble or anything.

Well, we were talking about stopping and having lunch and I mentioned bullock carts; these are carts drawn by a bullock. They're two-wheel carts; you see hundreds of thousands of them in India. They were a terrible detriment to us on the roads because the roads were narrow, and if you'd come along to a bullock cart, of course, if there was another car coming the other direction, you'd have to slow down, right down to practically a dead stop in order to get around the bullock cart.

Back to lunch along the highway—these people would gather around while we were having lunch. They would cause no trouble. We'd go outside and there'd generally be some of them that spoke some English. Of course, naturally many of the Indians speak some English. And they would converse with us, and they were naturally interested about the coach. They'd want to come inside; of course, this would be impossible because you couldn't—you just couldn't handle it.

We never had any problem with anybody at any time, but people are everywhere in India—people, people, people—you just can't imagine the crowds of people that are absolutely everywhere.

What were the smells of India like?

[Laughing] You name it, it's there, I'll tell you. It's something else, especially in the cities, because many of the cities have open sewers running down the sides of buildings and the sides of the streets, and so you can well imagine what the smells are like. And, the dirt, the dust—. Of course, the markets have always been very interesting to me, and we always in any large city got into the markets; they're tremendously interesting. You get to see such a variance of people.

Another thing that's *extremely* interesting to do, and we did this in New Delhi and again in Bombay, was to go to the railroad station. The railroads carry an enormous amount of people in India. It's a main method of transportation, and a railroad station is an absolute sight to behold because there are people there from all of the various areas of India, all in their particular national dress, particular type of clothes, whole families traveling. You'll find whole families sitting in the middle of the station cooking a meal and eating; people sleeping all over the station.

Every railroad station has a big area set off where birth control is explained to the people, where men can get a vasectomy right in the railroad station, for which they get a transistor radio. This has been the most successful program they've had—is the free transistor radio for the man who gets a vasectomy.

They have all kinds of free advice for the women; they have nurses there to explain it. They're doing all they can to try and cut down the population, but it isn't gonna have much effect because a man's social security is having a fairly large family. He has to have his family to take care of him in his old age. That's why he wants more children; that's why he needs children to work on his farm or in his factory or wherever other type of work he might do.

But the railroad stations are beyond belief in seeing these *masses* of people of every size, shape, and description, going and coming, and carrying all their belongings in a bag or gunnysack or something tied on their backs, with bedrolls— they all carry bedrolls. Many of the Indian trains have berths three high, on which people roll out their own bedrolls. These are, of course, all different classes of travel.

Do the trains run on time?

That I wouldn't know, but I'd make a big bet that they don't. Be impossible for them to run on time. But you would see the trains. We'd see them at crossings time and again, and they would be just absolutely jammed, just packed. I would say a car that was supposed to hold fifty people, would always have a hundred in it, so you can imagine how—what a mess this must be especially in the hot, rainy season.

Where would the locomotives and the cars be built?

Oh, they're all built in India. All that type of work's done there. They do lots of heavy industrial work in India now.

Another interesting thing we saw in Bombay which is something that very few tourists see—anybody that goes to India I've always told them to go see it—and that's the big public laundry in Bombay. It's a huge place; it's particularly interesting to see because you can see it from an elevated bridge that goes over some railroad tracks that are nearby. The clothes are brought into this laundry, picked up by people and brought in, and they are—first they take them and dip them in soapy water and throw them over their shoulders and beat them on a concrete pad. These are white shirts, pants, whatever might be—great big bundles of them they hold in their hands and throw them over their shoulders beating them. Then they are taken in and steamed overnight. They have charcoal fires, and they take these wet clothes and make a big circle, say a six-foot circle; it gradually goes up to form almost something like a beehive with a fire underneath it. Then they're covered with canvases and they're steamed all night. Then these are taken out, then they're washed again, then they're rinsed, then they're hung on huge, enormous, long clotheslines. All of this work, every bit of it, [is] done by hand. I've been down right inside this laundry and have lots of pictures of it. It's really an unusual sight and a sight, of course, that you don't see anywhere else in the world to that extent.

Would they iron the clothes after they were dried?

Yes, yes, they'd be ironed and delivered back. How they ever keep track of 'em all I'll never know, but they've got some system which gets 'em back to the right people, but I don't know how there can be any buttons left

on 'em when they get through beating them on these concrete pads. There would be three to four hundred men and women working in this laundry.

We saw everything else there was to see in Bombay; we went out to the Elephanta Caves. These are on a little island just outside Bombay, takes about an hour to go out in a little excursion boat. They were built many years ago, and there's Hindu temples and Hindu carvings and writings and gods inside these caves; they're quite interesting to see.

The market in Bombay, Crawford's Market, is a fabulous place. It's a big covered market. Not on this particular trip, but on a trip afterwards I stumbled into a place where they were smoking hashish and also a place where you could buy hashish. And then this guide that I had with me took me across the street to a place where they were smoking opium, a little place where there was about fifteen, twenty sadlookin' characters lying on wooden blocks—with their heads on wooden blocks—all passed out smoking opium, not a very happy sight to see.

When we left Bombay, we drove south, not right along the coast, but over through a town called Poona, and down into the state of Goa. Goa used to be a territory of Portugal, and shortly after India received its independence in 1941, they decided they'd like to have Goa, too, so they walked in and took that away from Portugal and made a state out of it. This is a resort area, and in the wintertime it's warmer there than it is in other parts of India, and there are many tourists, and incidentally, a great number of hippies in there from all over the world, all over Europe and all over America. Big colony of hippies. The reason for it is that their lodging is practically nothing, the food's cheap, and they can get all the hashish they want.

We were parked near—right near the beach, near a small government hotel; and one day a Catholic priest comes over to the coach, and he had two boys with him, and he said that he'd heard that there was a Catholic priest on the coach. And I said there was, and at that particular time Father Doyle wasn't there; he'd gone off walking someplace. Well anyway, he came back and so they had a visit. And it turns out that this priest that came to see us, his name was Father Rego, and very close to where the coach was parked he had a home for poor boys. So, he invited us to come over and see the home, and they'd put on a little program for us. Well, the home was in a ramshackle, old stone house that had one time been probably a Portuguese mansion, but it was in horrible state of repair. And we were taken up on the roof, and these boys—he had about a hundred boys at that time—put on a very interesting program.

He told us that the boys were—some of them were orphans, some of them came from broken families, some from families where the father was an alcoholic, some from extremely large families who weren't able to take care of all the children—for various reasons they were at the orphanage. He was doing quite a good job with them from what I could see. The boys all had to do a lot of work. The evening when we went over there, they were just ready to have their evening meal and they were cooking chapatis themselves which they had made, over a very makeshift arrangement over some charcoal—just some tin sheets of large tin cans that had been flattened out. They were cooking them on these sheets of tin.

What are chapatis?

A chapati is like a Mexican chapati made out of corn flour, like a bread. What would be another name for—? Like a tortilla.

We saw their little program they put on, and I gave Father some rupees to help him out and told him that I would try and send some more sometime. So with that we left and went on our way down to Bangalore, Mysore. And I believe it was from Bangalore that we flew to Ceylon. There was no ferry that went across that could take the coach, so we wanted to include Ceylon—we all had visas for Ceylon, so we went over for a couple of days and visited there, went up to Kandy and Colombo and then flew back to Bangalore. Then from there over to Madras, which is on the eastern coast of India, another large city, must be four or five hundred thousand, maybe more than that. They had a large university there.

We had, an interesting evening one time. A knock came on the door of the coach; we were in this government rest home, and it was three young chaps. They wanted to know if they could see the coach. And I said no, that we just couldn't do that. And they begged me; they said, "Oh please." They were studying architecture. So, finally we allowed them to come in, and we had a most interesting evening visiting with them and talking to them. They were all from—apparently, from pretty well-to-do families and all had had a good education and were very interesting young men.

Then—let's see, we started back up to Hyderabad and worked our way up, gradually, up the coast to Calcutta. All along the way through here there are various sites of Hindu temples to visit which I won't get into. There's one at a town called Bhubaneswar. There's a big temple there which we visited. And of course it's like a non-Catholic says, "Once you've seen a Catholic church, you've seen 'em all." And I feel the same way about a Hindu temple. [Laughing] So you get kind of tired of seem' them, but they're all somewhat different and they're all interesting.

Calcutta is something else. We didn't know where we were gonna stay there, so we parked the coach outside of town and took the Land Rover and drove in and checked out a couple, three hotels and finally found a place—a small hotel (it was new; it was owned by the government)—where we could park the coach inside their wall. It was right on a main street of the town, but we were well protected where we could park it. So we went in, parked it there, and then took rooms in the hotel and stayed in the hotel rather than the coach. By about this time it was kind of a relief to get out of the coach and get into a hotel for just a change.

Calcutta is—there's no other city in the world like it. You can find at least—I estimate without any question of doubt that there's a million street people in Calcutta. By this I mean people who have no homes, who spend their entire lives on the street. They sleep rolled up with some rags around them or an old blanket or a couple of sheets or a plain old cloth, *anything* to cover 'em up—maybe they're just covered up with newspapers. Late at night there's—not even late—nine, ten o'clock at night, every doorway, anyplace where there's any protection from any rain or just to get out of the way of people walking, you find people—whole families lined up asleep, side by side. Maybe they've put down cardboard or newspapers, some kind of protection to take away some of the cold from the sidewalk. In the mornings early, along the curb line there are stand-type water faucets, and you'll see people lined up, stripped down to their shorts, or stripped down to maybe just a pair of bathing trunks sitting there soaping up, taking pailfuls or water or cans full of water [and] damping it over their heads, taking a shower right on the street with hundreds of cars and people and pedicabs and sacred cows and goats and bicycles and everything else riding by at the same time.

In front of the hotel one day we saw a lady lying in the middle of the street, very old lady. And so we thought surely somebody'd do something about it, but nobody did a single thing—cars, hundreds of cars going by, hundreds of people walking by; nobody was doing anything. Finally I got ahold of Sharda, had him call the police, and finally they came and got the poor thing and took her away. But this went on for one and a half hours. Before she was picked up, she was lying right in the middle of the street; this'd be like lying right in the middle of Virginia and Second streets..

You can't walk on the streets hardly at all in Calcutta because of the beggars. Recently I was in Calcutta on my way up to Bhutan and Sikkim, which are way up north of India, up near Nepal. And I was staying in the Oberol—Grand Hotel in downtown Calcutta; I wanted to go out and walk for a while. I walked a couple blocks and I had to turn around and come back to the hotel because of the beggars grabbing me. Children grabbing my pants leg, women carrying babies and begging—they will not take no for an answer; they keep following you, following you, begging, begging, begging. It just—it gets to you, and you just become a prisoner in your hotel. You have to go back and get into the hotel. If you give one something, then you are mobbed by all the rest.

How many of these people are professional beggars?

Well, I had read and heard stories about this that there were people who hired cripples, particularly children, and I didn't put much faith in this, but I talked to Sharda at some length about it and he said, "Absolutely, there's no question about it, all over—in all the large cities of India there are beggars that are actually employees of some person

who forces them to go out on the streets.” Of course, there are even stories where some children have been maimed to make them cripples in order to make beggars out of them. Whether to believe that kind of a story or not, I don’t know. I do believe what Sharda told me because he claimed he knew this for an absolute fact. But I can’t believe that that’s all of them; that’s a small percentage of them. I’d say maybe—if that were four or five percent, that’d be big; the rest of them are legitimate poor people that have no way to make a living. They are people that have come down from Bangladesh, that have been chased out of Bangladesh and they come down to India. They don’t have anything except the clothes on their back and a few things they can carry on their shoulders. They have no trade. They’re probably farmers and yet here they are in a city. What are they gonna do in the city? Who’s going to hire them? I don’t know how they eat. Mainly through begging, I guess.

One hears stories of Mother Teresa. Have you heard any stories that you care to tell me about her work?

Well, yes, I’ve read, of course, about Mother Teresa and known about her work for many years. We didn’t go to see her at the time that we were there with the coach. I don’t know why we didn’t do that. However, this last trip that I just spoke about, when I was in Calcutta, I got a taxi driver to take me over to her original home in Calcutta. This is on an enormously busy intersection in downtown Calcutta, and Calcutta must be probably about ten million now, maybe twelve million people. So, I got out and went in, and just as you walk in is a partition; there’s a sort of an oval entrance way and then there’s a partition two or three feet in front of you and in front of that there’s a sign, Mother Teresa’s Home of

the Destitute and the Dying. You go around this little partition and immediately you come in contact with beds, very narrow, short beds (certainly none of them would be long enough for me), covered with a brown vinyl plastic and these pitiful, pitiful old people—not necessarily all old, most of them very old—people lying on them with just a small little sheet to cover them. In this one room there must have been, oh, I would say close to a hundred of these beds, just practically as close together as they could put them, just so somebody could step between them. The beds couldn’t have been over—I don’t think the beds were even two feet wide, maybe twenty inches wide, and about five feet long.

I noticed a doctor leaning over talking to a boy about fourteen or fifteen years old. He was terribly deformed. Didn’t look like from polio or anything; he just was extremely thin and emaciated. I watched him talk to this boy, and he was visiting with him and asking him questions. Finally he came away and I said, “What’s the matter with the chap?”

Well, he said, “He just came in a few days ago.” He said, “It’s just an extremely bad case of malnutrition.”

And I said, “Well, do you think you’re gonna be able to save him?”

He said, “I don’t know,” he said. “The problem is,” he said, “we don’t know maybe what else he has.” He said, “Maybe he’s got T.B. or something else,” he says. “We don’t know; we’ll just have to gradually get some food into him and bring him out of this horrible situation that he’s in right now and see what we can do with him.”

Mother Teresa has done a great deal, and she has these homes all over, even in New York City now. She has quite a few all over India. Of course I’ve never met her; I did meet whoever was in charge there that day and left some rupees with her. But she definitely takes care

of the poorest of the poor—in other words, the destitute person that has nothing—and lets them die with a little bit of dignity.

You mentioned the program that the boys put on for you at this boys' home. Describe that program.

Yes. Well, Father Rego plays the harmonica and a couple of the boys play—well, at that time they had one guitar. Since that time I have taken them two other guitars. And they just had a whole group of songs, one or two religious, most of them not religious songs, which they sang, and I think they put on some little short skit. Just a short, nice little program, very well done.

How many times have you been back to visit that home?

Well,[laughing] you asked how many times I've been back to Goa, well I've been back to Goa quite a few times. A funny thing happened to me. Of course when I saw Father Rego, I gave him some rupees. I forget what I gave him, I don't know—didn't amount to too much. But I did say that I would try and help him further. Well, I came home and promptly forgot about this—you know, it just didn't come back to me too much. And one night up at Lake Tahoe I woke up in the middle of the night soaking wet and I was wide awake, and yet these boys I could see them as we saw them singing on the roof of this old home. I could see them singing, and they were chanting, "You promised, you promised, you promised." And this is all I heard, this is all I remembered, but I was awake and I could even hear it. And, it really shook me up.

So, I made up my mind that I guess—that I better do something about it. I made a number of trips in the ensuing years hunting

tiger in northern India. So on these trips I would then go back in and see Father Rego. Well, the first thing that happened, he had secured a piece of ground on which he could build—wanted to build a new home for the boys. So, I gave him some help on that, and over the years have continued to give him help, and then just recently Mrs. Graves and I built a small chapel—he had no church or chapel at this new home, and we built a small chapel for them which was big enough just for the boys and for a few additional people. It's a very modern chapel, very well done, extremely nice design, and I made two stained glass windows myself for the chapel. These were thirty by forty-two inches done each in two sections, one of the Blessed Virgin and one of Saint Joseph, and I hand-carried these—Flora and I hand-carried them, I should say—we went together on a trip and took these over. And they were installed in this new chapel.

On the last trip to Bhutan I flew on over to Bombay and down to Goa and was able to see the chapel completed. And it's extremely well done and I'm very pleased with it. It's very simple—it has no supporting columns; the roof is one piece of concrete poured so that it's completely open. Of course, the chapel isn't very big; it would only seat the hundred and fifty boys that he has. And, it has benches which go completely around the altar instead of directly in front of the altar, so that the boys are surrounding the altar, rather than being just in front of the altar, so it creates a very nice feeling. There are no other decorations inside the church and Father doesn't intend to put anything else in other than the two windows. And for the stations of the cross he's intending to put just a simple wrought-iron cross for each station, because the church is too small to be cluttered up with a lot of statues and other decorations.

He's doing a fine job. These boys all get an education; they get to go the Don Bosco School which is right close there. Don Bosco is a Catholic school. And this is probably the main thing that they get out of being at the home—they learn discipline, plus the fact that they get an education. If they were staying at home, from the type of homes that they come from, they wouldn't get any education.

The last time I was there, the chap that drove for me had gone to school there, and he was presently working as a taxi driver for the main hotel there now which is a beautiful resort hotel called the Fort Aguada Beach Hotel. And this is owned by the Taj Mahal Hotel group out of Bombay. It's a five-star hotel and very well operated. Now this chap was just making arrangements to be able to buy his own car and have his own taxi. And this is all the result of being at Saint Joseph's Home. He had come to Father Rego when he was twelve years old. He's now about twenty-one or twenty-two years old. So he's got a pretty good life out in front of him now if he can end up buyin' his own car. And incidentally, he never approached me in any way, shape, matter, or form for any help in buying the car, nor did I offer him any help. He was making these arrangements all on his own in order to do this.

There was another boy who had just come back to visit the school; he had left the school and gone to an air-conditioning school in Bombay, and he had just gotten a big job in Saudi Arabia. So, you know, it's nice to see those results of what's happening with these boys.

The boys live extremely simply. For breakfast they get tea and a gruel which we'd call mush; it's a very thin type of thing. Lunch is very little, and dinner is hopefully some fish and maybe a little meat and a lot of vegetables and chapatis. They sleep on the

concrete floor, on a mat. Of course it's very warm there so they don't need very many covers, and they can sleep on the floor. It's a mat like a beach mat or maybe just a piece of cardboard. It's whatever each boy has. They have their own little metal cases and their own little mats that they sleep on, and they sleep right in front of their little tin lockers. They have very little. They have to take care of their own clothes; they have to wash them. And this priest has done this all himself in every way; of course, he has some people that help him, some people, of course, that he's hired, too, to help, like the people that do the cooking and things like that. They have space in this home so that the boys can have places to study, and they have a very strict routine from the time they get up in the morning till they go to bed at night. All in all he's done a fabulous job in taking care of these boys. He's now got a hundred and sixty boys.

Is it a vocational or an academic curriculum?

His home doesn't have anything. The Don Bosco School is just a grade school and high school. He is teaching them some trades. He's got a little printing press; they learn some printing, some of them do. Some of them learn to work on automobiles. He's got a carpenter shop in which they can learn a little bit about carpentry. So that they do learn some trade at the home.

What is Father Rego's background?

Well, he's a Salesian. He belongs to a Salesian order. I really don't know too much about his background. He's always been, I think, kind of a loner. This school is not worked out of the diocese at all. He gets no help from the diocese. He does get a little help from the state, but it's extremely small.

Incidentally, that gruel all comes from the United States through some program—the gruel or the mush that they get for breakfast.

This chapel that you and Mrs. Graves have built, is it dedicated to any particular saint?

Saint Joseph. Naturally, Saint Joseph because it's Saint Joseph's Boys' Home. Saint Joseph is the patron saint of workers.

How large a staff is employed?

Oh, I don't know. I think he's got only five or six people workin' with him because the older boys—they all have duties; they all have to take care of the younger boys. It's kind of a self-help situation.

How often do you hear from Father Rego?

Oh, I'll hear from him ten, twelve times a year. I get a letter from him now and then and not any particular specified time or anything like that, but he writes every now and then.

Since the school has a printing press, does it publish a newspaper or pamphlets?

Well, he's got one little booklet, yes, that's been printed up. But the printing press mainly does wedding announcements and advertising things for the local people, the local area. It gives them a chance to make a little money and also at the same time to be teaching the boys a trade.

We spoke a bit earlier about the smells of India. What can you tell me about the sounds of India?

Well, the sounds of India are—of course, in a city it's enormous. Horns honking and

people hollering, and the people—the taxi drivers in India particularly honk their horns constantly. The sounds of India are—I don't know; it's just like they would be in any big, great big enormous city. It's a little hard to say.

What are your impressions of the Ganges River?

When George Fry and I (that's my oldest daughter's husband) —we made a trip to Africa in 1975. And this was made with my son Rich, George, and Judy's husband, Stu Buckingham. Rich and Stu came on home after the hunt, and George came with me across from Nairobi to Bombay and then down to Goa, so he has been to Goa, been able to see that. And then we did go up to Benares. I had never been to Benares myself, so we went up there. The actual name of the town is Varanasi. This is right on the Ganges River, and it's probably the holiest place on the Ganges, and where thousands of people come all the time to visit the Mother Ganges, as they call it. It's the desire of every Indian, Hindu, that he be cremated and that his ashes be brought to the Ganges River and sprinkled on the Ganges River. Sharda's father died; this was his dying wish. And in a letter from Sharda he said that he made a special trip to Benares to carry out his father's wish and sprinkle his ashes on the river.

When George and I were there, [there were] thousands of people coming down in the early morning to bathe in the river, drink the river water, bring bottles of the water home, and yet other people were throwing the ashes of their deceased in the water. It's hard to believe, but they claim that nobody gets sick. How this can be I will never know. When you go down to the river, you can take a small boat, and somebody will take you down the river and back up all along where the steps come down where people can—especially on the big

holy days when there's hundreds of thousands of people that come—that can accommodate these great amounts of people on these steps and where the holy men can be there to bless the ashes of the loved ones and all that. And then in numerous places along the river are platforms where people are being cremated, which you can actually see and watch. The big piles of wood, and then they come along, bring the body, and the relatives, and they'd pick the body up and place it on top of the timbers, and the body is cremated right along the river.

There's an enormous amount of beggars at Benares. We had Sharda with us again this time when George and I went up there, and I said to Sharda, "We'll have to get some coins to give the beggars." And there's places where you can buy the coins there, small coins, because there's thousands of beggars. And these are cripples and lepers lining the steps of where you walk down, where all of the pilgrims walk down to the river. Well, coming back up, Sharda had this money to pass out, and I had gone ahead—I'd walked up ahead maybe three, four minutes ahead of him through this gauntlet of beggars reaching out with their deformed hands and everything and begging us. And Sharda was passing out some of the coins, and I'd walked ahead and I got into the car and there was a whole gang of them [that] came after him, following him, and I opened the car door and he jumped in and I said, "For God's sakes, throw the coins on out." So he did; he threw all the coins out, then, to the people, and of course they scrambled for them and picked them up, but they were almost ready to tear the car to pieces to get at us cause they knew that Sharda had these coins. It's [laughing]—it's a pretty gruesome sight. And there are many, many places on the Ganges River that this happens.

Now I just read in the paper yesterday where they've had heavy rains and big floods

where the water was five feet above the danger point in Benares. And having seen Benares and having seen everything that's all along that river, if it's five feet above the danger point, I don't know how there can be anything left.

Is the spirit of Gandhi very much alive?

Yes, I think, with lots of people it is. There's thousands of people [that] go to his memorial in New Delhi. I've been there a couple times, and there's always hundreds of people visiting it. And I'm talking about Hindus, not tourists, you know; I'm talking about Indians.

The reason that I mention Gandhi is that he was cremated at this location, was he not?

In Benares? Well, I would assume that he would be, but I don't know that. I don't know it as an actual fact. India needs a, great leader right now. India is crying for a great leader, and they don't have it. This present man, Desai, is— I think he's a very poor leader at the present time, and I don't think that he's got ahold of the people at all. Certainly Indira Gandhi was a lousy leader, corrupt in every way, and never promised or did what she's supposed to do, and then put thousands of people in jail for no reason whatsoever just because they were against her. She's trying to stage a comeback right now, but she certainly isn't the leader for India. They need a strong, strong leader; who that's going to be I don't know, but they surely need it.

One of the greatest dangers, I think, facing the world is that if Russia ever gets strong with India because India would be—except for the religion, except for the staunch belief in Hinduism, and of course the Muslims too—India would be super ripe for communism. It has all the ingredients. But I don't really think

that it would ever go clear over to communism because of their strong belief in Hinduism.

Why is the cow so sacred?

Well, the Hindu feels that the cow is their cow mother; they figure the cow is their mother as much as their mother was their mother because the cow gives them milk to drink. The cow not only gives them milk, the cow gives them fertilizer to fertilize the fields, the cow gives them a work animal, the cow gives them the hides to make shoes, to make coats. The cow gives so much that the cow is sacred in this respect to them and deeply—. They're very strict on this. You see cows wandering through the markets. You'll see a cow walk up to somebody that's got—let's say he's got a bunch of lettuce for sale, and the cow walks up and grabs some lettuce; well, the man that's in the market that has the lettuce, he won't beat the cow or anything. He'll just shoo it away easy like. He doesn't get really mad. Maybe he then finds some leaves and gives it to the cow. It's just their belief, and of course most Hindus won't eat any meats; some Hindus do. Most Hindus will not eat beef because of this strong belief; they wouldn't eat their mother, so they're not going to eat their mother cow.

Do they eat fowl such as chicken?

Yes, chicken, lamb. Of course, the Muslim won't eat pork. And, we were on a hunting trip in India just south of Nepal, and most of the crew were Muslims. And one day Gin Raj Singh's son (his name was Shashi) said, "We've got to go out and kill something for the crew." He said, "They haven't had any meat since they've been here."

And I said, "Well, what are you talkin' about? We killed the spotted deer the other day."

He said, "Yes, but then they wouldn't eat that because they weren't there to bless the animal at the time of its death."

So, we took one of the crew members with us who was a priest in the Muslim religion, and we went out and shot—I believe this time we shot a sambar; it's a deerlike animal. And we shot the animal, the priest ran over and blessed it just as it was dying, and then they brought it back and they would eat that. But they would not eat the other meat because it had not been blessed. And I thought at the time, "You have to really give these people credit; they're living up to their convictions, they're living up to their beliefs, far more than civilized people right in the United States do by a long ways." These people had gone five, six days with no meat; they'd been eating only vegetables, and they're used to eating meat right along, but they only eat meat that has been blessed. Where they would eat a cow or a lamb—but it would have to have been blessed by the Muslim priest at the time it was slaughtered. So you must admire these people. Here they are practically illiterate, but they're sticking to their beliefs and their convictions.

The future of India, then, appears somewhat clouded to you, maybe even dark?

Yes, of course it has ever since I've been going to India, and that's been for quite a few years; I forget when my first trip to India was. It was clouded then, and it looks about the same now. I don't know. It seems to, somehow, survive, but like I say, it needs a tremendously strong leader to bring it out of the doldrums. One of the biggest problems in India, of course, is corruption. Of course, we have corruption right here in the United States, but in India there's absolutely nothing that you want that you can't get with some money. And I mean nothing, absolutely—

anything you want. You can find somebody that'll beat around the bush for a few dollars or a few rupees.

What is the appeal that India, the country of India and the people of India have for you?

Well, I often ask myself that question because most anybody that finds out that you've been to India, they can't understand why you like India. India's such a vast country. It has six hundred million people; it's increasing at the rate of over a million a month. Every section of India has something different to offer. There are so many interesting things to see, like the Taj Mahal, the temples at Kajaharo. Well, the various Hindu temples, Buddhist temples, Moslem temples all over India are extremely interesting to see. The huge markets are beyond belief. There's just a great deal to see in India. I think that one reason it's nice to travel in India, too, is that English is pretty readily spoken—practically all over India—so this makes it somewhat easier for someone who only speaks English, like myself. The Indian people are very friendly; it's a paradise for a photographer. The Indian people don't object to having their picture taken and they are, in many areas, so *tremendously* colorful. For instance, the people in Rajasthan (this is a state in India)—the women are dressed very beautifully. Just a common everyday person, a person working in the field, a woman working in construction work, is dressed almost as if she were going off to a beautiful evening at the theater. She has all her jewelry and her beautiful bright-colored, embroidered clothes. Where else in the world can you see things like this? everything is so different than we knew it. The farmers bringing water up by turning a well—turning a pinup by driving a buffalo around in a circle. You see thousands of these

hour after hour bringing up a little bit of water to irrigate with. It's just such a different way of life and such varied way of life, that India just simply fascinates me. 'course, there's the terrible poverty in India; you have to learn to overlook that and realize that it's part of the way of life in India. There's the rich and the poor, and that's the way they live. There's not much you can do about it, and you sort of after you're there—at least with me—you learn to, in a way, overlook it. However, last time I was in Calcutta, it really *got* to me because you were an absolute prisoner in the hotel. The hotel I was staying at was the old Grand Hotel right in downtown Calcutta. You couldn't go out on the street because of little children, women, men, beggars of every type would follow you down the street grabbing your pants, grabbing you at the arm, begging, begging, begging. You couldn't get them away, no matter what you said to them. So, you find that you couldn't even go out after dinner walking. You were simply a prisoner in your hotel; you had, to go back to the hotel to get away from it. They have security guarding the entrance to the hotel.

There are over a million street people in Calcutta. These are people that have no place to live, actually live on the street, wash in the street, wash their clothes in the street, eat in the street, live in the street, sleep in the street. I've mentioned all this before in this history.

You mentioned some friends of yours who recently have been in both China and India. Do they share your same viewpoint?

I haven't had a chance to visit with them about this.

Would you yourself go back to India again?

Oh, I would, Sometime I'll go back to India, very definitely. Sure. Yes, I'd go back, do

something different there. There're still parts of India that we haven't seen, and I would enjoy going back.

The difference in the role of the women in China, India, Japan, and Russia—can you make a comparison?

Well, in Russia and China, the woman has to work. She has to have her job just the same as the man because of the society they live in. In other words, that's the Communist rules. In Japan, the woman lives a little different type of life. Some women work if they want to; some, if they don't want to they don't work, just like in the United States. I imagine that in Japan today that many women work because it's necessary, due to the high cost of living. In India women work in the fields and factories and all out of necessity— of course, making a living.

Tell me about your trip to China. How did you manage that to get in as a U.S. citizen?

I tried for six years to get a visa to go into China, into mainland China (the People's Republic of China). I tried everything that I could think of. I went to the China travel service in Hong Kong and Kowloon at different times when I was there. I wrote everybody that was even remotely talking about the possibility of travel in China. I joined the U.S.-China Friendship Association in Honolulu and also the chapter in San Francisco, went to some of the meetings, endeavored to get on some of their trips. However, in those early years, after China first opened up, about eighty-five, ninety percent of the travelers that got visas to go into China were overseas Chinese. The authorities in China wanted people who had once lived in China to come back and see China under the operation of the Communists.

In 1976, Mrs. Graves and I were in New Zealand, and one Sunday I picked up the paper and it was an ad by Thomas Cook and Company for an escorted tour to China. Well, Monday morning I was at their door before they opened and talked to the gentleman about the possibility of my going. He said, "Well, the trip was for New Zealand residents."

I said, "Well, I'm an American."

And he said, "Well, maybe we could put in your application, and you could be a resident and your address could be my home."

"Well," I said, "I don't think the Chinese'll buy this one, but—"

He said, "Well, let's try it."

So we did and to make a long story short, I got the visa. The tour was actually to start in Auckland, but I met the group in Hong Kong. This was in June of 1977, and we started from Hong Kong taking the train to Canton, entering China on May twenty-fifth. There were eighteen in the group. The train ride [was] from Hong Kong to the border which is Shunch'ang, and is, oh, about an hour, an hour and a half. Then you go through Chinese immigration and customs and change your money to buy yuan (the Chinese currency). Then you take the train on into Canton.

We had originally thought that we were going to start our tour in Canton. We found out then that we were not, they were taking us immediately to the airport, and we would fly to Peking. Our group was eighteen. I was the only American. They were from New Zealand, and one gentleman was from Australia. The first impression you have, of course, is getting on the Chinese train. It is spotlessly clean. They immediately serve you tea. It's much cleaner than the train that comes up front Hong Kong to the border. Our first dinner, our first Chinese dinner was at the Shunch'ang at the railroad station; they have a big dining room for tourists. In

all of the dining rooms—this one and all of the others—you were always separated from any local people. The dining rooms were set up strictly for tourists. You might be in the dining room with two or three tour groups, but there would be no Chinese eating in the dining room.

The airplane that we flew was a very modern 707 which had been purchased from the United States. We flew into Peking. In Peking my first impression of China, really, was looking out the window the next morning from the hotel and seeing the thousands of bicycles on the street. I estimated that looking up and down the boulevard from my hotel room that I could see at least fifteen hundred bicycles in motion. There are no private cars in China whatsoever. You see lots of trucks; you see cars, but they're all government cars, probably transporting dignitaries and tourists.

We visited, of course, Forbidden City, and in the old days, of course, nobody was allowed in there except the feudal lords. And now all of China can come in, and it was full of Chinese tourists when we were there. These are big, beautiful buildings, museums, and lots of artwork—very, very beautifully decorated and well kept up. We had three permanent guides: one main guide, who—his name is Mr. You (actually spelled y-o-u), and he spoke excellent English; there was a young lady that was a guide—she spoke fair English; the third man spoke no English at all, and I couldn't quite understand what he was doing there, but he was with us constantly. So, I was very careful that I didn't do or say anything derogatory. We'd get back on the bus, and he might be sitting behind us—I sure didn't do any talking with whoever was next to me about what we'd just seen or made any wisecracks about the communist system or anything like that, because I'm satisfied that

he spoke better English than I did. In fact, I had to warn some of the New Zealanders about this. They didn't believe me, but I'm—[laughing] there's no other reason that he could be there than to just check up and see what he could find out.

'course, the greatest thrill of the whole trip was going to see the Great Wall. The Great Wall of China was built to keep out the invading Tartars. The wall is considered a remarkable engineering feat; it follows a winding course over numerous mountains—to cover a distance from New York to Omaha. It's built of brick and granite walls filled with earth, and it's covered with a very hard coating of bricks in lime. It's just *gigantic*, and when you think that it was—of course, it was done through century after century, and ruler after ruler added more to it and all done by hand. It's just almost—there's no way that you can really understand how it was built. It stands over twenty-five feet high, tapers from a width of twenty-five feet at the base to fifteen at the top. It has many towers to protect it—gun towers. It was started in the late 200 B.C., and was finally completed in A.D. 1300. The part that we saw has been reconstructed; much of the great Chinese wall is in a deteriorated condition now.

We got to walk up to this one fortification and back down, and the day we were there, there were many soldiers that were on leave that were (Chinese soldiers) there looking to see the same sights that we were seeing. They'd come to see the Great Wall. One interesting thing is that the Great Wall is the only man-made structure that the astronauts were able to identify from outer space.

We, of course, saw the pandas at the zoo and then in Peking, we visited the Ming Tombs. There's a whole series of tombs called the Ming Tombs. They've only opened one of them; they take you down in and show you

the way that the bodies were kept, the great caverns that they were kept in, and also in the museum you can see the various artifacts that were taken out of these touts. I don't know just when they intend to open these others.

All of these places that we would visit, we would see many, many Chinese tourists. That was our best chance to view other Chinese—visit the actual Chinese without having them be too standoffish to you.

There's another place called the Summer Palace. It was a recreation area for the royal families as early as 100 A.D. It was rebuilt in 1860 by the Empress Dowager Tzu-Hsi. She used funds that were meant for the Chinese navy to rebuild this palace. So she thought that she should—since she was using navy funds, she oughta do something in the way of building a ship, so she built a ship completely out of marble, *huge* ship, setting in a lake.

In Peking we visited many arts and crafts factories where they were carving ivory, carving jade, painting duck and goose eggs; and one of the most interesting was where they were painting the inside of snuff bottles. They paint whole scenes on the inside of glass snuff bottles with a tiny bamboo stick with one or two hairs on the end of it. I bought three of these snuff bottles while I was there.

The cloisonné work is absolutely gorgeous, and we got to see them do this. This is an extremely intricate design that is put on vases. The design is outlined in copper, little thin strips of sixteenth-inch copper, and it is filled with enamel. It is of various colors and then baked and, of course, polished. Most of these were young Chinese girls and boys that were working at this. The carving of the jade was extremely interesting—huge, big pieces that they were working on. There was one man working on a piece with a long chain—two long chains to it. I had the guide ask him how long it would take him, and he said he had

been working on it for a year and it would probably take two more years to finish.

In Peking there is the great huge square, the Tian'anmen Square. This is the largest square in the world and will hold a half a million people. It has ten massive buildings and this includes the Great Hall of the People. All of these buildings were completed in ten months. They just decided they wanted to build this square and all these buildings, and they built them all in ten months. At the time that we were there behind the huge fourteen-foot-high wall, they were building the mausoleum for Mao Tse-Tung. I judged by looking through a crack at this tomb (at this mausoleum) that it was approximately three hundred feet square. It was made of marble and it had been completed in six months' time. It was completed and open shortly after we were there.

One interesting thing in Peking was all along the main boulevard there were earthquake shelters. These were small little buildings, housings, which had been built by individuals who lived in high-rise apartments all along the main street. They were built in a park area that ran along each side of the boulevard. They were built of all different sizes and shapes mainly of strips of branches, I should say, of trees and straw, and covered with mud. In other words, they could move out of the brick building and move into these shelters in case of an earthquake. They had a very serious earthquake on June twenty-eighth of '76. It was close to Peking and killed thousands of people. In fact, it was in Tangshan. These shelters were very ugly, and I am sort of wondering what they will eventually do with them. I would think that they would all be cleared out in a very short time.

One day I told them that I didn't want to go on the morning tour. I didn't feel well,

and [I] slipped out by myself and took a lot of pictures around the Peking area with no problems at all. Up in northeast China, which used to be Manchuria—and incidentally, you didn't dare call it Manchuria; it's called Northeast China, for sure—we visited the towns of Shenyang and Changchun. These were very interesting to go to because they were in an area where there had not been too many tourists. Unfortunately, in Changchun I was sick with diarrhea for three days and spent most of those three days in the hotel room. They had a rather poor hotel in this town; it had not been kept up at all. The lavatory leaked; the toilet leaked. There was water on the bath floor all the time. I had to get the room boys to come in and attempt to clean it up. They weren't very anxious to do so. Fortunately, there was a doctor in our group who had some medicine with him, and he helped me get the diarrhea straightened out.

Right across the street looking out the window from this hotel in which I spent all this time was an old two-story house that had been, I would think, in the old days, a private home or mansion. From the size of it, looking at it just from the one side, I would judge that there were maybe ten or fifteen rooms in the house. It had an entrance, a portico, that came out over a columned entrance, and there was an enormous amount of activity that went on in this house, so that I guess there must have been ten or fifteen families living there. You would see them very early in the morning doing some washing, cooking; I could look right across into the windows. One window would open up and a man would bring a chicken out and onto the roof of this portico, and the chicken had a small string or rope tied to its leg. He would leave it out in the morning, apparently until it was time for him to go to work; then he would bring it back in. In the afternoon you would see him bring

the chicken back out. In front of this house, bordering right on the street, was a public toilet, and the people from the house used this toilet as well as people from the surrounding area. So apparently none of the homes had private bathroom facilities, or toilet facilities. Every day the wagon would come to pick the night soil up from this public toilet.

We spent a few days in Changchun and then went to Shenyang, and this also is a very interesting city. Again, they had not seen many tourists. I'll come back to that in just a little bit later. We visited a hospital which practiced Chinese traditional medicine. We were met by a group of doctors and immediately went into a big room for a brief introduction, "B.I." as we called it, and served tea. Then we were taken to various sections of the hospital to watch various things that they were doing. One was a dentists' area. There was a Chinese lady sitting in a dentist chair as we walked into this particular room, and the dentist had her hands on each side of the lady's face with her thumbs on pressure points on the cheekbone, alongside her nose. She was holding these two pressure points rather tightly and did so for about five minutes. Then she reached in and wiggled the two teeth that were to be extracted, asking the lady if it pained her, if she had any pain. [The] lady shook her head, so she went in with the forceps and pulled the two teeth out, swabbed them with some cotton swabs and the lady was all smiles, glanced around the room with all of us watching her—she clapped her hands and got up out of the chair and walked out of the room.

Another area they were taking care of children's tonsils. They do not believe in removing the tonsils, and they were cauterizing them with an instrument that was heated over a sort of a Bunsen burner, a flame; this would be an alcohol flame I would

think. These instruments were long, maybe an eighth of an inch in diameter, metal with a sort of a flat part that came out at an angle at the end, maybe as big around as a dime. These would be over the flame; they would get redhot. The doctor would reach in and hold the child's tongue down (these children were nine, ten years old), and you would hear the sizzling as the instrument was placed against the tonsils. I might add that the expression on none of these children's faces changed in any way at all; none of them cried and none of them acted like they were being hurt at all, and it was—I'm *sure* that it hurt.

Another room, a lady had trouble raising her left arm. Apparently she had arthritis or something. The doctor applied acupuncture to it using a needle about eight inches long. He shoved it down into her arm up on the top part of the shoulder, twisted it for three, four minutes, removed it, asked the lady to raise her arm. She raised her arm clear up above her head, and you could definitely see she was very excited and happy that she could now raise the arm up.

They were also applying acupuncture to the ears of children who were hard of hearing. They had a large section of Chinese herbs, thousands of different types of herbs, both framed in pictures and in jars. Probably the most interesting thing we saw in this hospital was in a room they had a young gymnast about twenty years old on an X-ray table. And on an X-ray illuminated screen an X-ray was there which showed his left upper arm broken. You could see the bone actually set clear apart. At the time that we went in, they were giving him acupuncture in areas of both ears, in between his thumbs and forefinger, and into the shoulder—the left shoulder. This went on for about twenty, thirty minutes, they explained, and two doctors got ahold of him and took his arm, pulled it so hard that they

almost pulled him off the table, turned up at the elbow and hit it with the palm of their hands jamming the two bones together. And the other man twisted and held the arm getting the bones into position, the second jamming it with his elbow, again, almost pushing him off the table, and all of this done with no, absolutely no expression of pain on the young man's face. They explained that they were going to fix the arm with curved splints which were made out of a sort of heavy papier-mâché material. They had first coated the arm with mustard and wrapped gauze around it. Then they put on the three curved splints and tied these together with Velcro straps. Velcro is the material that has the little hooks on it and is used on so many things here in America. was surprised to see it in China; they could wrap it around and get it quite tight. They explained that this method was much better than the old-fashioned western method of using a plaster cast, and would heal three weeks sooner. I discussed this with my doctor here in Carson and he couldn't see how this could be because there was no support from the elbow. And naturally this would be where the bone would pull apart. The bone could be held in place with these splints, but it could not be held in place vertically. But anyway this is what they told us. Again, when they were finished, the young man all smiles got off the table and walked out of the room. After they had set the arm, they let quite a few of our group take a look at the arm, and the bone being in the proper position, they let them examine it through a fluoroscope that they were using.

When we came out of the hospital there was a huge group of people waiting to get in, I suppose, to the hospital, waiting their turn. And we became quite a sight for them because they were all watching us.

One interesting thing that happened when I went to the hospital to get a penicillin shot

for a cold that I had along with this diarrhea, when we came out, there were a lot of people apparently waiting to go inside. One small boy followed us and kept saying something to his mother. I asked the guide what he was saying, and he said the little boy was saying that they came in a car, they came in a car. This seemed to be very amazing to him that we would come in a car. We visited a middle school in Shenyang where they put on a program for us the little Red Guards. They had a Chinese traditional orchestra and did various singing about the great Chairman Mao, and “down with the Gang of Four.”

We visited—and also in this area—a commune where a great amount of the vegetables were grown in hothouses. This is because it's quite cold up in this area and they have a short growing season, so they built enormous hothouses which were covered with plastic (clear plastic), and heated with hot water pipes. One in particular was—you could see cucumber vines as far as the eye could see in this area. They also had a pigsty which we went through, and there were no flies at all. In fact, I joked afterwards that I'd only seen *one* fly. This is an amazing thing in China; it dawned on us that after a few days in China, that we hadn't seen any flies. This was in June, it was starting to get warm, the dining rooms had no screens on them, and yet there were never any flies anywhere. So we asked our guide how come there were no flies. And he said, “Early on after the revolution, Chairman Mao decided that flies had no place in the Communist society, and he ordered us to kill all flies and stop their propagation.” He ended by saying, “Therefore, there are no flies in China.”

Where this was rather dramatically brought out was when we left China, we went from Canton to the border, Shunchun, on a train; on this train there were absolutely no

flies at all. We got out, went through Chinese immigration and customs, and changed our money back, then walked across the bridge that we had entered eighteen days earlier, and entered the immigration building on the Hong Kong side and believe it or not, it was absolutely full of flies. This was just across the river and the train from Shunchun on into Kowloon, Hong Kong, there were many, many flies. I can't figure out how this could happen, but I saw it with my own eyes, so I know that it did.

Incidentally, this commune that we visited, they had eighty enormous underground cellars in which they could store tons and tons of vegetables. The cellars were covered with soil and, of course, the top part of these cellars were all farmed just like the area around them. We visited a home of one of the members of the commune. Again, it was the same story. He told us how terrible it was before liberation, how wonderful it is now. I really had to feel that this was a showcase home just for foreign visitors. We were never called “tourists.” We were called “foreign visitors.”

In Shenyang one night, we were taken to a performance of an acrobatic team. we went in a bus; we drove in, went into a side entrance, were escorted right down to a section of seats that had been reserved for us. The theater was absolutely full except for these seats that were open for us. As we walked in, everybody applauded. We sat down and immediately the performance started. It was an extremely interesting, very good performance, the typical type of Chinese acrobatic show at which they are very, very proficient. During intermission we were taken out into a private room with sofas, big overstuffed sofas and chairs, and served tea. Again, when we entered the back end of the room, we were given applause by the whole audience and sat down, and the performance started.

In Shenyang there was a huge square, or actually I should say *circle*, roundabout across from the hotel. This was very big. I would say it must've been six hundred feet in diameter, maybe a little more than that, with a huge statue of Chairman Mao in the center. After dinner we used to walk over—a group of us would walk over to this square, to walk around, and we'd immediately have a huge crowd around us. They'd just squeeze right in, and they were just standing *looking*. Nobody'd talk; we'd try to create some conversation, but this was never possible. If we started to walk away, the crowd would simply open up automatically, making a path for us to walk out. One day we drew so many people, I said, "Well, let's get out of this big open area and walk down the street and see if we can do a little shopping." We started across the street and the whole crowd followed us—I would say a hundred, and fifty, two hundred people. So here we were, twelve or fourteen foreign visitors walking down the street with a hundred and fifty, two hundred Chinese following us. We walked down one side of the street, came back up another, and we went into a small shop where they sold some wine and cookies and biscuits and things like that. Some of the people wanted to buy some wine; I bought a few cans of canned fruits to have for breakfast. We went into the store and of course, the people followed us right in until we could hardly move. The man behind the counter got quite disturbed and had a big talk with them, and so everybody went outside. When we finished in the store and came out, there they were waiting for us and kept following us right on back to the hotel.

In this area we visited another jade factory which was much the same as the other one. It was the same type of very nice work. And, of course, another kindergarten where there were just little tots, five, six, seven years old.

They put on a show again, full of propaganda. This had to be a showcase place. The little beds that they were sitting in (supposedly took their naps in) were spotlessly clean—beautiful sheets on them, beautiful pillows—just a little bit too fancy and too spotless and clean to be natural. I think it was a showcase thing again. One interesting thing, after the last song I asked the guide what they were singing about, and he said they were singing, "Down with the Gang of Four, down with the Gang of Four. Let us pull the skin from the bodies of the Gang of Four." These are little five-, six-, seven-year-old children.

In back of this school there was a huge, big area, probably as big as a football field and you could see that it had been all torn up. A little further down as we walked around the building, the people were working on a concrete structure which I couldn't quite figure out what it was. I asked the guide and he explained that it was the entrance to a bomb shelter. The guide said that there was a city under the city, and that all the shelters were interconnected. Incidentally, three, four places around we saw them doing this. One was right alongside the hotel that was all boarded off where they were working underground on some type of a shelter. They were very much afraid of an attack by Russia, and are preparing to save themselves with these shelters.

At this school they had one section where the children were working on building transistors for radios. In Shanghai I again got out by myself, took a lot of pictures and street scenes. In Shanghai the buildings are very old, very British, very Victorian, very dilapidated; they haven't had a coat of paint even since liberation. In the fronts of all the buildings you'd many times see heavy bedding—comforters, sort of—which were hung out on clotheslines or poles to air them out.

One interesting thing that we saw especially in Shenyang— 'course, we saw this in other places, but particularly in Shenyang—were so many horses pulling small carts. That [is] the first time that I've seen three horses hooked up to a cart. There would be one in front and two in back harnessed together and they had diapers of plastic sheets attached to them to catch anything that might drop, so that the Chinese could use it as fertilizer. I tried to get a picture of this, but I just assumed that I'd be in a position later on to get at, but never did.

In Shanghai we were taken to a place called the Children's Palace. This was a very palatial building which had once been owned (in quotes) by a "Middle East Imperialist," before Liberation. It was an extremely beautiful building all done in marble, huge, enormous, beautiful carpets. The Children's Palace is a school where gifted children and children, of course, who were from families that adhered to the Communist line could come for particular lessons in various forms of music and art. There was a Chinese traditional orchestra; there were choral groups, children learning embroidery, also learning how to do puppet shows. It was very, very interesting to see this place, and apparently quite hard for the children to get into.

One interesting thing here was when we arrived at the palace, got out of the buses, some young children came and greeted us. These children were probably seven, eight years old. Now the children at this school, this Children's Palace, were twelve, fourteen years old. The little children tried to come to each, one of us and take ahold of our hand and they did with, many of the group. I avoided this because I wanted to be taking pictures. And they stayed with our group all the way through going from room to room through this Children's Palace. I couldn't quite figure this out, what they were doing, and they were

trying to say a few words in English— "Where you from? How you like China?"—a few simple things like that. As we came out, they all said good-bye, clapped their hands, and I see them run off toward another bus that had just driven up. So I asked the guide, I said, "How come this group of young children are here?"

And he said, "Oh, they're from the Propaganda Department."

So these were young children that were going to school to learn English and were being able to get early training in taking care of the tourists. He made no bones about saying they were from the Propaganda Department.

One interesting thing, one of the members of our group asked the guide if the former owner of this palace had been a Persian.

He said, "No, he was a capitalist."

In this area, we also visited a wristwatch factory which must have had several hundred people working in it. And, incidentally, I see a picture in my album of a part of the wristwatch factory with a huge bulletin board in back of it which was full of propaganda pictures. These we saw everywhere we went. Along the tables where these people were working in the factories would be a little red flag. There would be mottoes and things like that set up. We also visited a deaf-mute school where they claimed they were having a great amount of success with acupuncture on being able to teach deaf-mutes to eventually be able to talk and improve or cure their hearing. They applied acupuncture to quite a few of them while we were there, and these deaf-mutes put on a little show for us. It was marvelous to see them trying their best to form words which, of course, is very difficult because they can't hear. We visited a huge industrial equipment exhibition in Shanghai. Incidentally, Shanghai is located on the bank of the Whangpoo River which is about twenty-five miles from the

Yangtze River. All along the waterfront are huge, gigantic, beautiful high-rise buildings all built by people from Great Britain [and] other foreign capitals prior to liberation. They used to house banks, insurance companies, et cetera.. Now they house factories and people actually live in them.

Again, I got away from the group and went out one afternoon and wandered around by myself. I got a lot of pictures along this river where there were hundreds of barges working back and forth hauling logs, lumber, coal, everything that you can think of. And one funny thing is that in all these barges, the men working on them were wearing life jackets, so apparently none of them knew how to swim. I got a lot of pictures of street scenes of Shanghai this particular time. One Other way I got quite a few good pictures was to sit in the front of the bus, and I was using the new 400 ASA film which was very fast and I could stop the action right from the front of the bus and get many Street scenes that would be impossible otherwise.

One morning about four-thirty, I was awakened by very loud martial music; this was again in Shanghai, and I looked out the window and I could see people gathering and they were starting to do exercises. So, I got dressed and went downstairs and wandered over, as the hotel was just along this river, the Whangpoo River; and all along the river there was a great walkway, sort of a park area where people could walk and promenade. This was completely full of people as far as I could see. I wanted to walk on down to do some photography; it was so crowded with people it was impossible to do it. They had music in various areas being played and they were all doing various types of calisthenics and exercises. I would estimate that I could see easily five thousand people each morning. I went out several mornings—I think every

morning that I was there I went out and watched this and took pictures. It was certainly quite a sight to see. One area there were young boys and girls who were apparently learning acrobatics—were working with their instructors in stretching the leg muscles and the arm muscles by pushing them up against buildings.

We visited a commune about an hour outside of Shanghai. Incidentally, these communes are very large; they have about seventy, eighty thousand people in them. Not only do they raise various farm products, they have always some types of small factories. This particular place had a very antiquated factory which made parts for motorcycles. It also had a section weaving baskets—big baskets to carry vegetables in, small, very delicately woven baskets. I bought one basket for five dollars and had the guide ask the girl how long it would take her to make it, and she said from eight to ten days. They had a Chinese design in the bottom of the basket. The guide said that this read, “In industry, learn from Tach.” This meant Taching, which is the center of the oil industry. It was also a place where they made very elegant furniture— this would all be for export—a place where they were carving, doing the very delicate, intricate carving that you find on Chinese rosewood and teak furniture.

Again, we visited a home in one of the communes which was definitely a showplace setup. The lady said that they were fishermen before liberation and lived a very hard life. Three children died of starvation. Now they have a house to live in and everything is wonderful. They still work at fishing. Last year, four worked and they made one thousand dollars and were able to save two hundred and fifty dollars in the bank. The kitchen of this family was shared with two other families. Right out on this commune we saw them

harvesting wheat by hand, tying it into small bundles—the women and men— hundreds of them doing this.

We now proceeded back to Canton which we didn't get to visit on the way in. We were taken up to Foshan to visit a ceramic factory and an old temple. The ceramic factory was quite interesting. They did mostly figures rather than chinaware of any type. The temple had been used in the old feudal days. Because they did a lot of china work there, there was an enormous amount of ceramic figures on the outsides of these temple buildings, clear along the roof line. There were scenes all done in ceramic, painted and quite unusual. There were many interesting things there—one in particular was a great big set of wall pictures which again talked about the "Gang of Four," and how Chairman Hua had crushed them with one stamp of his foot.

I have some pictures here of our head guide. I mentioned before that he spoke excellent English. He simply did his job, never got overly friendly with us in any way. He was very capable. And then, of course, the other guide who didn't speak any English—.

In Canton we visited a paper-cutting place. This is where they take thin pieces of colored paper and, by using a very sharp knife, about one-eighth of an inch wide and as sharp as a razor, cut a design into about ten layers at a time of this paper. These are like little doilies, extremely delicate. Just what they're used for I don't know. I bought some of them and brought them home. They were very cheap. What the Chinese use them for I really don't know.

We had a farewell party for the guides one night in the room—thanked them all. I wanted to give a present of some type to this Mr. You, but the guide that was with the group from New Zealand said, "Absolutely, no, don't do it, because there s no way that he would accept it, and it would embarrass him."

Just outside the huge hotel in Canton, there's a great big sign denouncing the imperialistic, capitalistic United States. The railroad station in Canton was very modern with brand-new escalators and, of course, a huge picture of Chairman Mao. I suppose by now this picture's been taken down because I understand they're downplaying Chairman Mao; they've even done completely away with the Red Guard which Chairman Mao used to set forth the cultural revolution.

I've already explained our going back across the bridge and into Hong Kong, and the story about the flies. The one other thing is the minute we got across the bridge, we found women selling coke, cigarettes and sandwiches, which of course, never in any place in China did we see this. Our baggage was taken out of the Chinese train and moved across the bridge by hand or by carts, and loaded on the train winch would take us to Hong Kong. All in all, it was an extremely interesting trip; I'm glad I got to do it when I did before there were too many tourists moving into China. My impression of it was that it's really quite unbelievable to me that nine hundred million people could be so rigidly controlled. I think it's extremely fortunate that although the Chinese are Communists, they have no use for the Russians. Were the Russians and the Chinese to get together, it would certainly be a tough situation for the Western world, because in years to come, when China becomes an industrial giant—which she's going to do if they continue to operate as they seem to now; it's a very large country—and when you think of nine hundred million people, or maybe a thousand million people (which is a billion) all being able to work together and think as one, it would be a great—tough thing to cope with if Russia were working hand in hand with them.

I look to see China have an enormous impact on the economy of the Western world. The average salary of a Chinese is twenty-five, thirty dollars a month, so they're going to produce goods very cheaply and be able to undersell anybody else in the whole world. They have had no inflation in China since the revolution, so you can readily see if they can produce these goods, get them into other countries in the whole Western world; they're going to be putting many of our people out of work. One particular thing I remember reading about recently was that the clothespin industry in the United States was having a difficult time, as was the work glove industry. This was because of the enormous imports of clothespins and men's and women's working gloves that were coming into the United States so cheaply that they'd actually put several factories completely out of business. If this continues, it's gonna be very difficult for us to compete with, and yet we seem to be so anxious to do business with China—that we're going to be giving them the know-how on oil production, the know-how on mining. We, as well as Japan and other countries, will be shipping whole factories over to them, and in ten, fifteen, twenty years they're going to be enormous competition to the various companies in the United States. It's interesting to note that in today's paper (this is November 10, 1978), Pan-American World Airways Intercontinental Hotels Division has come to an agreement with the Chinese to put up a group of hotels of around a thousand rooms each. These would be put up in the major cities at first and then going into various resort and lake areas. They would be operated much the same as the Intercontinental chain is now with all the amenities that the Intercontinental hotels have. So, China's going out after the dollar and believe me, they know how to get it.

I might add that in Hong Kong, the Chinese have now probably fifteen, twenty huge, gigantic department stores. These are as big as any department stores that we have in the United States. They are absolutely crammed with Chinese merchandise. Each one has an arts and crafts section in which in any one of these stores you could see more arts and crafts (that is, carved jade, furniture, carved ivory, jewelry, items like this)—in any one of these stores you could find more than we saw on the whole trip. And the stores are jammed full of people. The Chinese—the Hong Kong Chinese—are in there buying because the merchandise is extremely cheap. This is everything that you can think of that you'd find in a department store in the United States.

They've also started buying locations and putting in gasoline stations. They have banks scattered all over Hong Kong. They're going to be a big force in the Hong Kong area and all the rest of the world in the years to come.

Did you visit Taiwan at any time in your travels?

I was in Taiwan quite a few years back.

Do you recall any differences between the Chinese society of Taiwan, when you were there, and Chinese society of mainland China on this recent trip?

Oh, of course, there's an enormous difference because in Taiwan they operate under the capitalist system, and in mainland China they operate under the communist system, where everything is owned by the state. Everything is owned and operated and done by the state, whether it's a farmland, a factory or a place where you get your shoes shined. Anything— it's operated by the

state, whereas in Taiwan it's an individual enterprise. Of course, that's an enormous difference.

How much presence, on this trip to mainland China, did you see of the military?

We saw practically no military at all. Once in a while, like at the Great Wall or the Ming Tombs, other tourist sights, you'd see groups of soldiers who were probably on leave, just visiting these places. They would be young men from other parts of China that would be in like the Peking area, so they'd go out to visit the Great Wall. So, we didn't see much—any great numbers of the armed forces at all.

What kinds of photographic equipment did you take into China?

I took what they call the little Leica. I took two bodies just in case something happened to one. It's a good thing I did because the take-up spool on one of them broke. These are a very small light camera; that's all I carried, and I did use the 400 ASA film which allowed me to take a lot of pictures inside without flash and also a lot of pictures right from the front seat of the bus, because of the speed of the film.

Any restrictions on the—?

No, there were no restrictions at all on taking photographs. We could photograph practically anything we wanted except, naturally, right at an airport, bridges or something like that. But even when I went out alone, nobody bothered. The individuals would object to their pictures being taken, and of course, when this was done, you just didn't do it. Many times I had to stand over in a corner by a building and just sort of *steal*

pictures as people came by, without them seeing me take the pictures. It was difficult to get them to pose for you. In fact, I don't think I ever did at any time; I had to more or less just take the pictures before they realized what was happening.

How would you characterize the role of women in China today?

All the women work just like the men, and in all of the communes, all of the women have something to do. If they get pregnant they are allowed so many weeks of and then they are back to their job. Another thing, in most of the communes, it's decided what particular woman or family can have the next baby. It's very much discouraged having over two children in a family. If you have the third child, they cut down your rations and do things to discourage people from having more than two children. Then another thing that's done to hold the birthrate down, a man is not supposed to get married until he's twenty-six or -seven years old. It is not a law, but it's just simply isn't done. Permission wouldn't be given for them to be married, or if they did they'd be in ill repute with the party or with the commune, and would be deprived of some form of revenue or something that they would normally get. It'd be taken away from them for doing this.

What is the role of the wall poster in China?

Well, you see these posters everywhere in China. Of course, in the old days it was to bring across the line of Chairman Mao; now it's to bring across the line of Chairman Hua, or to tell the people anything they want to tell them. It's propaganda goes on constantly in the communes, on the radio, in the newspapers, posters. Everything is "work

for the state,” “produce for the state.” In one commune they had some huge wall, posters proudly telling how many sewing machines, how many bicycles, how many wristwatches that were owned by members of the commune. Incidentally, if a person wants to buy a bicycle, it becomes quite a complicated process and he probably has to take him two or three months to get permission to buy the bicycle. He has to have a need for it; he has to get the permission of his local leader. He has to get permission of that particular section of the commune. He has to get permission of the head of the commune; then it goes to the Communist party member in the commune and after due deliberation in five, six months to a year, he may be given permission to buy a bicycle.

Would you go back again?

Oh, yes, I'd make another trip to China if I could get into some of the other areas. I would particularly like to go into Tibet. I'd like to go into the western part of China. There are quite a few cities, of course, that are still— where they're not allowing tourists in, and I think if the right kind of a trip'd come up, why, I'd go again. Most of the trips that I see now are basically the same ones that I made, although a great many of 'em don't go to northeast China, and this was one fortunate thing that we got to do. believe I enjoyed the two cities in northeast China far more than the other cities. This is just because the tourists hadn't been there and the people were more unaccustomed to seeing us and were more natural.

Life in China is so controlled from, as I started to say earlier, right from even before you're born. You're told whether you can be born, and from that time on, you're told everything that you can do and everything you *should* do. You're told what school to go

to; you're told what section of the community you're going to work in, what type of work you [can do]. You're told when you can get married. If you don't adhere to the line, completely to the party line, if you rebel in any way at all, all of a sudden you find that the husband is shipped off to another section of China and left up in another area to work for four, five, six years, completely separated from his family.

Incidentally, everyone in China works at some time or other in the factories or in the fields. Now this was at the time I was there. For instance, the president of a college, or a teacher of history in college, he has to spend one month a year out working in the fields or in a commune, or working in a factory. I have read since leaving there that under the direction of Chairman Hua they decided that this is rather foolish to be wasting a teacher's time, a scientist's time working out in the fields, and they are gradually doing away with this program. This, of course, was one of Chairman Mao's programs to continue to keep everybody in line and make them tow the line of thinking that he was spreading.

Do you see any reason or any good that might result from a program of national service here in this country by engaging young adults, between the ages of eighteen and twentyone, twenty-two in some form of national service analogous to what goes on in China and other authoritarian countries?

Well, that's a little hard for me to answer. I don't think at this point we're ready for that unless there's some big threat to our system by Russia or by China or some part of society.

You mention the use of Velcro in China, especially in the use of Velcro for treating fractures. Would you tell me about the

invention of Velcro that—the invention that you have come up with using Velcro. Maybe I should put it that way.

[Laughing] This is a rather funny thing. I had a friend in Hawaii who came back from a trip to New Orleans, and he'd had his pockets picked. So somehow, it just dawned on me that by using Velcro I could set up a system where it would be impossible to pick your pocket. What I did was cement with contact cement about a three-inch by two-inch piece of Velcro to my wallet, and then on the inside side of my left hip pocket I sewed a piece of Velcro the same size (a piece of the other *side* of the Velcro), so that when my wallet goes in and hooks into the Velcro, there's no way that anybody can pick your pocket.

Did you demonstrate this to the Chinese?

[Laughing] No, no. Incidentally, the use of this Velcro—the only place I saw it was in the hospital. I never saw it anywhere else, and I doubt if they have it anywhere else.

Did you notice any gaming in China?

No, no gaming. I never saw gaming of any kind.

No old men on park benches playing cards?

No, not anywhere. I don't think I ever saw any dominoes or chess, nothing like that. Under the communist thinking, that would be a complete waste of time. These people should be doing something worthwhile.

What type of games did the children engage in?

I really don't know. We saw the children around schools and all, but I never saw them

just out in the yard skipping rope or playing ball, or anything like that. I suppose they must have some recreation of some sort, but if we did see them, they were doing calisthenics or physical exercise of some sort, but never any particular type of games. And I never saw the children playing with things like you would see anywhere else.

Has jogging become part of the scene in China?

No, I never saw any jogging, but everywhere there were these big exercise programs going on in the morning which went on for maybe forty-five minutes to an hour and a half, probably.

Anywhere in your travels, have you seen jogging or running as you do here in the United States?

We saw some of it in France this year, a little bit, on our trip, but I don't think that anywhere it's as popular as you see it in the United States today.

Can you tell me what it is you yourself get out of travel?

[Laughing] I don't really know, I just—I have the travel bug; I've got a tremendous sense of Curiosity. I like to see new things, different things, different people, different ways of living. I've always liked to do this. I've learned lots of lessons from traveling. The biggest lesson I learned in traveling through Siberia and China was the appreciation of the word *freedom*. I certainly don't think that anybody in the United States fully understands this word, or fully understands what it is. We have freedom to do anything we want to do. In China or the Soviet Union, if you wanted to go forty miles to visit a relative, it would probably take two or three weeks to get permission to

do it, if permission were granted at all. Here we simply go out and get in our car or get in an airplane and away we go. If we wanta change jobs, if we don't wanta work, we have that freedom. Certainly, I think in many instances, we are abusing the freedom that we have in this country, and it would be well that many of the radicals and dissenters of our government—if they could go spend a year in Russia particularly, or even China, they might come back with a little more appreciation of the word *freedom*.

Mrs. Graves told me sometime ago that she was warned prior to your marriage that she was marrying a "travel bug." Do you have any comment on that? Do you think that she shares your love of travel?

Oh, yes, Flora's traveled with me practically all the time, except for some of these offbeat trips which are a little bit tough to make, where the accommodations aren't good and which wouldn't be too comfortable for her. She's made all the trips that we've made together. We did all of the trips on the coach together. We made two hunting trips together. Most of the hunting trips I've made by myself or with other friends. The only two other major trips that I've made by myself would be Siberia and China, and I did do the Bhutan and Sikkim by myself, because this was up in an area that was—where you were staying in pretty miserable hotels, and accommodations were not up to what Flora would like to have 'em.

Mrs. Graves and I have just returned from our trip to Europe which we mentioned in our last interview at Lake Tahoe. This trip included a few days in Paris and a week's canal trip in France. Then we flew to Lisbon and spent a week or so in Portugal; then drove over through Seville, Spain down to Algeciras.

We took the ferry across to Tangier, Morocco. We toured Morocco, and I'll go into that a little bit later. We took the United Airlines to New York, stayed overnight and then flew the Concorde to Paris. I've always wanted to fly the Concorde, and this was an opportunity to do this. And it was quite an experience.

We left New York City at one-fourteen p.m., and arrived in Paris at four-forty-five p.m., New York time (three hours and thirty-one minutes elapsed time). At one time, the Concorde got up to fourteen hundred and seventeen miles per hour. Mach 1 is six hundred and seventy-five miles per hour; Mach 2 is thirteen hundred and fifty miles per hour. We were flying at supersonic speed for two hours and thirty minutes of the three hours and thirty-one minutes. At one time, we were up to close to sixty thousand feet altitude.

The Concorde is quite narrow. I am not able to stand up straight in it. It has to be made this small in order to get the speed out of it. The seating is quite tight; it's really coach-class seating. Yet the price is somewhat above first-class prices. I think it's about twenty percent above first class. The food and service was superb, and of course, it's a fabulous thing when you stop to think that you're crossing the Atlantic Ocean in three hours and a half.

I personally, don't think I would do the trip again this way. It would be easier, actually, to fly nonstop over the pole from the West Coast to either Paris or London. Interesting enough, there was an article on the Concorde in one of the magazines (and I saw the same article in quite a few newspapers) that they now have five which they haven't been able to sell. They were built by Great Britain and France in a combined effort. This is because they just cannot fly them economically and neither Great Britain nor France are making any money on them. But anyway, it was

certainly an experience, and I'm very glad that we did it.

We had a few days in Paris in which we ran into a little bit of rain. However, in general, on the whole trip the weather was very good, and we couldn't complain about that at all. I got everything arranged to go down to meet the *Davia* (this is the small boat that we did the canal trip on); we were to pick the *Davia* up at the town of Vitry le Francois. This would have been about a two-hour-and-a-half train ride. However, the day we were to leave, the trains went on strike, so I had to hurriedly make arrangements and find a driver and a car, go over to the station and get a refund. They kept ten percent of the ticket—the train ticket (I don't know why they did that), and we drove through the countryside down to Vitry. We had no trouble finding the *Davia*; we had instructions where to find that, so we boarded it. The *Davia* is a small ocean-going vessel, quite old, carries only four passengers. It had two small cabins and one dining salon. It's cramped, but otherwise very comfortable. It's operated by a man by the name of John Shelby who has worked for the *New York Herald Tribune* in Paris; he's thirty-five years old and his partner is Jacques Lucas. Jacques was twenty-eight, a Frenchman. John has been in France for seven or eight years, so, of course, he speaks French very well also. They have been making these trips now for two years, and really know what they're doing. They do the cooking and everything on the ship. Every morning they would get up and ride their bicycle off in the little village where we were staying, go to the local bakery and get fresh breakfast rolls for breakfast. Around noon, we'd stop and maybe do a little shopping, and we ate all of our meals on the boat.

On this trip, we started in Vitry, proceeded down to Epernay, and we stayed overnight in several small towns along the way; went

through Lagny and on into Paris. This took us six days, covered about two hundred kilometers and went through about forty locks. The canal system in France and in most of Europe is quite complex; much of it was built over a hundred years ago. It's mainly been built and designed to carry barge traffic which delivered goods and merchandise (coal, oil, anything you can think of) throughout France. They have a tremendous system of locks built into the canals and rivers. These locks—many of them over a hundred years old—some are still hand-operated. Many of the lock-keepers have been on the same lock for twenty, thirty, forty years. The gates are closed by hand. Then the valves—which open the water gates, which lowers the water in the lock, or actually raises the water in the lock, one of the two ways, either whether you're going up or down—those are operated also by hand on many of the locks. Going through a lock would generally take maybe twenty, thirty minutes; it all works very smoothly. The barges are designed so that they just fit into these locks; it's unbelievable the way they can maneuver these huge barges loaded full of various types of commodities, with only six to eight inches to spare in width, and only a few feet in length. Many of the bargees, as they call them, the owners and operators of the barges, spend their complete life on the barges. Their wife travels with them; their children travel with them. They have special schools for the *bargee* children, and it's a complete way of life for these particular people. Their quarters, on the barges—we never were inside them, but John and Jacques told us that they are very beautifully furnished, and we could see the living quarters on the barges with lace curtains and the windows were always just spotless. And of course, this is home for these people.

I had heard of canals in Europe, but this is our first actual experience with it. John and Jacques spelled each other as far as cooking was concerned. One would cook one meal per day and the other would cook dinner, for instance. They turned out some tremendously appetizing meals and they were both very pleasant to be with, and it was interesting for us because it was much the same type of travel as on the coach. We were on it, we just went along, we stopped wherever we wanted to. We had no particular place that we were going to stay, stop for lunch or stop and visit. Did more or less as we wanted to, just as we did with the coach. One place we did stop and go in and visit was at Epernay. We visited a winery there which makes champagne. We visited the caves of the winery. You go through these caves on an electric train. They have seventeen kilometers of caves filled with twenty-five million bottles of champagne. The champagne is stored in the caves; the bottles have to be turned. They're put in laying almost flat, and gradually they tip them up to where they are almost vertical in racks. And after so many years, the champagne is—the bottles are taken out. The end of the champagne bottle is frozen. This chunk of frozen champagne is taken out, and this removes the sediment. The bottle is then recorked, some additional champagne is added, and then it goes back into the racks again. It's really quite a complicated process, still being done the same way it's been done for hundreds of years.

Coming back into Paris, we parked on the Seine River directly across from Notre Dame cathedral. It was a beautiful sight. We came in late in the afternoon at sunset, and then after it got dark, the lights came on which light the outside of Notre Dame, and it was quite a fabulous sight sitting in the *Davia* looking over at Notre Dame cathedral. We could go right up and walk along the boulevards of

Paris from where we were moored on the Seine River. We were also on the Maine River for some time, plus the canals. Flora and I are quite sold on this type of travel, and we've been even doing some planning that we might make a trip next summer on a barge which has been converted into a canal boat, and it takes six passengers. The reason we'd go in the summer would be so we'd be in a little better weather; it was actually a little cold to be doing the trip this time of the year. We got back into Paris and then flew to Lisbon.

Spent a few days in Lisbon, made arrangements for a driver. We had originally planned to have a driver in Portugal, then fly to Casablanca and pick up a driver in Morocco. However, the driver that we found in Lisbon was very well acquainted with Morocco. He had a good car; he spoke conversation English, so we decided to just go ahead and keep him. So, we drove in Portugal. We went over to Estoril, and it's just ten, fifteen miles from Lisbon over on the coast. We left Lisbon. Incidentally, in Lisbon we stayed at the Ritz Hotel, which Flora and I had stayed at before. This is really a fabulous hotel. It's perhaps one of the most beautiful hotels in the world. The bathrooms are completely done with marble, and I mean walls, ceilings, floors, all done in different colored marbles. Portugal has a great amount of marble. The hotel is actually very elegant, one of the nicest that we stayed in anywhere.

So we picked up this car and driver. The driver's name was Julio Santos. He had an Opel car which is actually a Chevrolet that's made in Europe. It was about sixteen, seventeen years old and had six hundred thousand miles on it. He was now operating on the third motor. It was in perfect condition. He'd been driving it all the time, from the time it was a new car, and he took excellent care of it. We never had a flat tire or any problem

with the car at all. We drove down south to the Algarve section. That's the southern coast of Portugal and it's an extremely beautiful area, many beaches and resorts; we stayed at several very nice hotels along the way and took our time driving across. And then [we] cut across over to Seville in Spain, and actually just stayed overnight in Seville. The only thing we did there was to visit the fabulous cathedral that's in Seville. It's the third largest cathedral in the world.

Then we drove south to Cadiz and down to Algeciras which is just across from Gibraltar. Incidentally, Spain has broken off all relations with Gibraltar. Spain thinks that Great Britain should give Gibraltar back to them. I really doubt that they're gonna do this. However, they allow no communication with Gibraltar whatsoever, and yet it lays just off the coast of Spain. If people want to go to Gibraltar, they have to take the ferry to Tangier and then come back on another ferry to Gibraltar. They cannot go directly from Spain to Gibraltar. When we were in Gibraltar in 1960, I think it was, a huge number of Spanish people worked in Gibraltar, went back and forth each day. I don't know just where they get their employees now. I suppose they get 'em out of Morocco.

From Algeciras we put the car on a ferry and went over to Tangier and started our tour of Morocco. From Tangier we drove right straight down to Casablanca, stayed two days each in Casablanca, two days in Rabat, two days in, was, two days in Marrakech and then back to Casablanca. It was generally a very interesting trip. It is one that I would not do again. I've found that when you've seen one Moroccan town, really, you've seen them all. They're all much the same. The main thing of interest in each Moroccan town would be the mosques or the medinas, which means "old city." These are generally the old walled cities

and they are very crowded, very jammed, generally without automobile traffic. And this is where the Casbas are—these are the crowded, jammed marketplaces of each one of the towns, all of them very interesting. The most interesting [one] was really in Fès because of the fact that in many of the little shops the workmen are actually producing what they are selling. They're doing things on small wood lathes and selling them; they're doing brass work, carpet work, embroidery—you name it, it's being done in this great market in Fès. It was interesting one day in Casablanca, I wandered into the medina myself in the afternoon (I had gone out for a walk), and I thought, "Now I've gotta be careful that I can find my way back outa here." So I kept taking little points of reference as I went along so I could find my way out. After I decided to come back out of the medina, I started back and I was just hopelessly lost. I didn't know which way to go because you're in these little narrow streets (now, when I say "narrow," I'm talking about eight, ten feet wide), jammed with people and donkeys and bicycles and carts and everything you can think of. So you have really no reference points, no large buildings or anything. I finally went into a shop and found somebody that spoke enough English where I could explain that I wanted to get out of the medina. So he sent a young boy with me to lead me out of the place.

Incidentally, we found the prices in Morocco extremely high, which surprised me because I know that the employees can't be making high salaries. For instance, in most of the hotels the room was fifty to sixty dollars a day. In Marrakech at the hotel La Mamoumia, the room was a hundred dollars a day. This is for a very nice but simple twin bedroom. This particular hotel had just been recently remodeled in the public areas and

was very, very elegant. Meals again were very high. 'course, Morocco used to be owned by France, so everything is French and French is the main language. All of the restaurants are French-type food; it's all a la carte, so meals were running anywhere from thirty-five to forty dollars for the two of us which really seems quite high for Morocco.

On the twenty-seventh of October we flew back from Casablanca to London and stayed for three days, and then flew Pan American nonstop, London to Seattle, which took us eight and a half hours. On this flight the steward told us that they only had fifty percent of their staff of cabin attendants on the particular flight. What he didn't tell us was that the cabin attendants were on a sick-in, so that they were attempting to strike against the airlines and there had been quite a few flights that hadn't even been able to leave because they didn't have any cabin attendants. The plane was almost full, so this poor crew really had to work to get the meals out and all. However, it was a nice flight. It was only eight and a half hours, so this is actually almost practically the same time as if you fly to New York and take the Concorde over.

In London we enjoyed decent weather, and each day around noon the sun came out and we had no rain, so we were able to do quite a bit of walking and sight-seeing. And all in general it was a very nice trip.

Tell me what you did in the way looking into gaming on the Continent or in North Africa?

Well, I didn't look into any gaming in particular. There was a—I had a card to the Playboy Club when I was in London—I went in to see the gaming there. I'd been in this club before; it's built on the ground floor, plus three upper floors—gaming and restaurants on each floor. When I went in, they had a large

sort of very well-done gaming limit card (it was actually done with brass letters) telling the limits on that particular floor. And the minimum bet was five pounds which would be ten dollars. I didn't know the fact that this was a special gaming area, but we walked back into where the tables were. They only had five or six "21s" and couple of Roulette tables. The man asked me if I wanted to play, and I said, well, I didn't know. I was just coning in to look around.

He says, "If you wanta look around, go up on the other floors." He says, "This is for special players," and he said, "players only in here, no lookers."

I said, "Very sorry," and backed away.

We did go upstairs and looked around. They didn't have any particular big action. They have enjoyed an enormous amount of play from the Middle East states, the Arab people. Most of the employees in the Playboy Club speak Arabic. We did eat there; had a nice meal, and our waiter was an Arab.

In the hotel in London—we stayed at the Sheraton Park Tower—I was down at the reception one day and two Middle Easterns had just checked in. I was waiting to talk to the girl on reception and this man was standing alongside of me and he reached down, picked up a briefcase, set it on the counter, opened it up and pulled some twenty-pound notes—a twenty-pound note would be worth, at that time, forty dollars. Incidentally, that was the lowest rate of exchange that has been in many years. The dollar had sunk to its lowest point right at that time. Anyway, he pulled off some, a bunch of twenty-pound notes, gave them to the gentleman that was with him and told him to go over to the cashier and get some change. He took these notes off a stack of twenty-pound notes that must have been over an inch thick, and he had a stack of hundred-dollar bills which was about three quarters

of an inch thick. I estimated he had seventy, eighty thousand dollars in his briefcase, of what I could see, and he made no pretense of being of any concern that I see it. In and around the hotel, we saw many people from the Middle East, all overdressed, and looked like they were just exuding with money.

What was the view in Europe of the U.S. economy and the U.S. dollar?

Well, we really never got to talk with anybody about it, anybody that—I was talking with no one in any financial circles or anything. Of course, the papers were full of it. Well, really, the only—the main paper that you get there is the *London Times* or the *New York Herald Tribune* printed in Paris (you can buy it in London also; it's a very good paper). And you could see between the lines—of course, the whole of Europe is very alarmed about the dollar dropping in value, and of course, this is mainly because of the fact that we haven't got any kind of a decent energy program; we hadn't done anything up to that point to curb inflation, and the rest of the world is quite concerned about it. That's why the dollar has been dropping. Since then, President Carter's come in with some mediocre controls. At the outset it had quite a dramatic effect, but it's my guess in the ensuing weeks we'll be back in the same old position again, because what he's doing—he's offered to put up a fund of thirty, forty million dollars to go in and buy dollars on the market. Well, all, this is gonna do is, people that have been able to buy dollars at a lower price will unload them to the U.S. at a higher price; they'll make some money on it, and this'll just be more dollars that we're dumping on the European market. It's just, in effect, really, it's just printing more paper money to try and cure our ills, our financial

ills, but certainly they're not gonna do it by just printing more money.

Tell me about the European view of the Arab-Israeli peace talks that were going on in Washington at this time.

I noticed in the London papers, the feeling was that President Carter had done a great job in bringing Sadat and Begin together and getting them to at least talk. Right at that particular time they were threatening to break off negotiations, and he intervened and kept the talks going. The papers, what papers that I read there, were very praiseworthy in Carter's efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East.

Is the American traveler now treated with disdain or with great hospitality in Europe?

We were treated with—no different than I've ever been treated in Europe. We were treated very well. No, it's just a little tough on the American because of the exchange; it makes everything cost so much. It isn't only the exchange, it's the fact that they've had inflation in Europe also. Inflation has been very high in France, so if you take the fact that they've had inflation in France, plus the devaluation of the dollar, and it makes it extremely expensive for an American to travel in Europe. I don't understand prices there; it's really outlandish. Men's jackets were anywhere from three to four, four hundred and fifty dollars; these are just plain sports jackets. I saw a nice sweater in a store across from the hotel in Paris that was—it was a very well-designed sweater trimmed in leather—it was close to four hundred dollars. This is just a little bit out of line payin' four hundred dollars for a simple sweater.

To go back a bit, tell me about the reception area for the Concorde that Air France has in New York.

I don't really recall that as being anything particularly special. It was just a nice area, nice section. We were boarded just like we were boarded on any other flight. There was nothing special about it.

What about the cabin appointments of the plane itself?

Well, as I mentioned before, the seating was quite tight; it was like—actually, I would say the seats are a little bit narrower than what we know is normal coach-class seats. The aisle was extremely narrow, so that when the attendants had a cart in the aisle, there was no way that anybody could get around the cart. On a regular—on a 747, for instance, if there's a cart in the aisle, you can work your way around it stepping into a seat and around the cart. You were just absolutely completely locked in, in this instance, not to where it made any great deal of difference, but it was just fairly tight, that's all. You noticed the difference. The service was excellent; the food was excellent.

I have heard that Air France aboard the Concorde serves the meal on china, is that correct?

Yes, they do. 'course, that's done on first class on practically any airline now.

Any particular design to the service?

No, I don't remember anything in particular about it; it was very nice china, but nothing of any special nature that I remember.

What were the wall coverings like in the interior of the plane?

Just like any other plane, any other large plane. Vinyl fabric.

How many attendants did the Concorde carry?

Gee, I really don't know, must have been five or six, but I don't know just exactly.

Describe the sensation you had in taking off in New York.

There's no sound or vibration; there's not even any particular sensation at all as you take off any different than if you take off in a 747. You have no knowledge at all when you pass through the speed of sound, where you go from Mach 1 into Mach 2. Often, of course, the Concorde will create sonic booms, but this is why they don't go into the supersonic speed until they're over water.

How is it that you know that you've reached Mach 1 and Mach 2?

They have a digital readout on the indicator on one of the bulkheads which you can see very easily. You cruise between fifty and sixty thousand feet.

What does the world look like at that altitude?

Well, it was all overcast; we never could see over the ocean and it was immediately into clouds, so we, of course, didn't get to see anything. It's quite an experience and—. However, I don't believe that I would do it again unless I lived on the East Coast. Then I think for a businessman it would be great because he would only have a three hour and a half flight going to London or Paris. I see now

Air France is gonna make a flight into Mexico City with a stop at Washington, which should pick up some traffic for them; but without lots of subsidy from the government they're not going to be able to continue to operate these airplanes. Nobody else is buying them at all.

Upon your arrival in Paris, were you treated any differently in customs because you came aboard the Concorde?

No, no, none whatsoever. Not at all. After all, they've had this airplane on quite awhile; it's just another airplane.

What are the air terminals in Europe like?

Oh, very modern, very efficient, escalators, walkways, all the modern amenities that are possible in airports. The duty-free shops are unbelievably big; they're regular shopping centers. We had no problems; the service was excellent at the ticketing counters, and plenty of porters and no problem with customs. It took us longer with customs returning to the United States than it did anywhere else, of course. And we came back just a few days ahead of the application of the new allowance of three hundred dollars per person. This is going to speed up the customs clearance. The one thing the United States has done now is as you enter the United States, U.S. citizens don't have to go through immigration. The first custom official that checks you—he checks your passport on a computer for immigration and, of course, with the new threehundred-dollar limit, it's not very often that you're going to be over six hundred dollars for two people, and if you are, for the next six hundred dollars, they have a flat ten-percent duty. So they don't have to figure anything out or anything. If you've got six hundred dollars worth over your three hundred dollars,

you pay sixty dollars duty and that's it. This is gonna simplify it and speed up customs tremendously. Of course, they're still going to check bags whenever they can, looking for contraband and looking for illegal drugs, which I can't blame them for.

How was it that you went about to find transportation from Paris to your point of departure on the canal? That must have taken some doing on your part with the train strike.

No, this is extremely simple. In all the hotels of Europe they have what is called a concierge. This is a counter where there's always an attendant, and it would be like the bell captain here; however, the concierge in a large modern hotel in Europe can do absolutely anything for you, and I mean *anything*. You want your airplane ticket checked, you want it reconfirmed, you want it changed, you need a ticket to a stage show or the follies, or *anything* you want the concierge can get for you and I mean anything. So I simply went down to the concierge and told him I had this problem, that we needed a car. He got on the phone and the car was there in thirty minutes—a young chap, very nice driver, very nice car—and we left within very short time of when we would have been on the train.

What was the cost of that particular travel?

It was a little bit over a hundred dollars; I don't remember just what. It wasn't bad because he had to drive us down and back, and it was about a two-hour-and-a-half drive.

You mentioned a bit earlier the winery, and I was wondering how it was that these twenty-five million bottles of champagne got turned.

They had many, many men that do just this. We saw them when we were traveling through the caves on this little electric train—that were actually turning these bottles and changing them in the racks so that they were gradually pointed almost straight down. They start out laying 'em in a flat position, and they gradually change 'em like this, tipping the bottoms up and the corks down, all done by hand—work in those caves all day long. And this is actually what they look like, they look like tunnels, really, built up with stone all over. They've been there for hundreds of years.

And of course, the temperature and humidity is—.

Is to remain constant, that's the important thing, yes. I forgot what the temperature was in the cave, but it remains absolutely constant.

Did the winery have a tasting room?

Yes, uh huh. Oh, Flora had a taste of wine, but she doesn't particularly care for champagne, so she didn't drink much of it.

Did the winery have a restaurant?

No.

How much different is a winery in France from a winery in California?

I would say they are basically the same—same basic idea; they have to do the same thing.

But the marketing approach of a California winery is a bit more advanced.

Oh, I would think so. Yes, but then, you know, it depends on the type of wine, the type

of care that they wanta take of it. I suppose there's lots of difference, but I don't have any way of knowing.

Now, the people that are employed by the wineries, do they live in a nearby town, or does the winery itself have housing?

No, they just live in the general area, I suppose, and come to work, just like they would here in a factory, or in a winery here. They didn't have special housing for them.

The Ritz Hotel in Portugal, you mentioned that it's one of the top—what would you say, one of the top ten hotels in the world?

I don't know that it's one of the top ten, but it's certainly up in the top twenty or thirty. That's for sure.

Tell me the price of accommodations.

I think the room in the Ritz was around thirty-eight dollars. 'course, prices are a little lower in Portugal for everything. Portugal and Spain are still fairly reasonable to travel in compared to the rest of Europe.

Whereabouts in Portugal is the cork-producing region?

Oh, it's all down through the south of Portugal. We went through thousands of acres of cork trees. This was rather interesting. They peel the cork off; it comes off—in. one piece they can peel it right—they just slit it down the side of the tree and peel it off. It comes off an inch, an inch and a half, two inches thick, in pieces five, six feet long, and it doesn't injure the tree. And it takes nine years for the cork to grow back, and they can reharvest the same amount of cork in nine years. Of course,

Portugal is one of the largest cork-producing countries in the world.

How long do these cork trees live?

Oh, they live for three, four hundred years, just like olive trees. I wanted to go through a cork factory and talked to the driver about that, and he said that all of the factories were in the north of Portugal, because labor was cheaper in the north of Portugal than it was in the south. So, the cork was all shipped to the north of Portugal and the factories that actually make the various cork products. Corks actually for champagne—for wine bottles and cork wall products and various things like that, was all made in the north of Portugal because of the labor market.

So the wineries of France, and probably of Italy, get their cork from Portugal.

Yes. A friend of mine that used to make fishing tackle up in Granger, Washington, was telling me that he bought all of his cork from Portugal for fishing lures. So it's a big industry in Portugal, and actually, you find many cork trees in Morocco also. Apparently, it's because of the climate and the elevation and everything. It lends itself to the growing of these cork trees.

Throughout your oral history, we have seen what a knack you have of finding drivers or guides. How did you come upon the driver in Portugal?

Again, went to the concierge and told him what I wanted and he said, "Just a minute," and he ran outside, and came back in with this Julio, and he was just about to take some people on a sight-seeing tour of Lisbon. And the concierge says, "I think this is the man that

can do the job for you." So we went back in the lobby and sat down for a few minutes to talk and made an appointment for later on in the evening, and I interviewed him and came up and told Flora I thought I'd really found a good guide. And that was it. It was the only one we talked to.

I would say that Julio had a pretty good fare that day.

[Laughs] Yeah, he was excellent. Some guides, you know, they talk your head off, they've got crazy guide jokes and all that, but he talked when he was talked to and listened when he was supposed to and was an excellent driver. We were very happy with him.

There's something that I've wanted to ask and I think this is a good time to do it. You've traveled now to more than one hundred and thirty countries. What have you learned about the global family of humankind that you didn't know before you started to travel so extensively? Is there any common thread that binds the family of man together, or are we all just different groups of people living upon this blue planet?

Boy, that's a difficult question [laughing]. The really only common thread that I can say binds people together would be religion, belief in God. Or I should perhaps say a supreme being. The great difference that separates peoples are the people who do not believe in God, or in a supreme being, and that's namely the Communist world, the Soviets and the Chinese in Communist China.. They have no religion of any kind, so actually, they have no close binds with anyone else. I happen to be a Catholic as you know. Of course, we have binds and ties. Our church ties in the scope of the whole world because the church

is everywhere; it's universal—that is what the word *Catholic* means. So, perhaps this is the one thing that binds people together. It's interesting to note that you can go anywhere in the world and hear the same mass that we can hear right here in Carson City. We were recently in London, and went to the famous old Westminster Cathedral, and it just happened to be the first mass that was being said by the cardinal who had been at the election of the new pope, John Paul II. It was a pontifical high mass; it was in Latin, which it's the first time I've heard a mass in Latin for a long time. There were at least forty priests concelebrating the mass. It was really quite a thrill to see this. Of course, I'd been to mass in Thailand, and I've been to mass everywhere except in Russia and China. Even in Russia we did go to a Greek Orthodox church. However, their ceremony was so foreign to me that it didn't have any connection with the Catholic mass as we know it.

I've had many interesting trips. One of the—probably as different a trip as I had was a polar bear hunt. I wanted to hunt polar bear. I'd hunted tiger, and of course, I'd hunted in Africa, and I'd found out about a hunt that started in Norway and went up into the Arctic Sea and for polar bear. I got all the information on it and then signed up for it. And one day I was visiting with Warren Nelson from the Cal Neva Club. Incidentally, Warren is a very good friend of mine, and I became acquainted with him shortly after I came to Nevada, and he was extremely knowledgeable in the Keno business and was one of the few casino owners who thoroughly understood slot machines, knew how to figure slot machine percentage, and so we used to trade off ideas, trade off new reel assemblies, new ideas for slot machines over the years. And he also gave me quite a lot of help in the Keno department. And we really worked

very close together even though we were competitors.

Well, I happened to mention to him that I was thinkin' about this hunt, and one thing led to another and I said, "Why don't you come along?" And, so we checked and there was room for him on the boat and he joined me. The trip was from June fourteenth to June twenty-fourth, 1968. We flew to Tromsø, Norway and the ship that we went on was the M.S. *Fortuna*. It was an icebreaker over a hundred years old. The sides of the icebreaker were twenty-two inches thick of laminated layers of wood. Leaving Tromsø, you have to go down out of the fiord into the main channel and it gets quite rough. I took seasick pills and tried to get everybody else aboard to take seasick pills. Nobody would, and I was the only one that wasn't seasick. It was a spectacular trip when we finally got up into the ice—the huge, gigantic icebergs and piles of ice where the ice had broken. and great slabs of ice as big as a city block piled up, one on top of the other, where they'd probably been torn loose in storms—every size, shape and description that you can think of. The captain would stay up in the crow's nest which was seventy-five, eighty feet above the deck of the ship and this was electrically heated up there, because it was extremely cold, of course, and he would be on the lookout for polar bears.

There were only four people on the trip: Warren, myself, and a man by the name of Nicholas Franco, Jr. from Madrid. He had a girlfriend with him which completed the party of four. Nicholas was a relation of Generalissimo Franco. I think he was a cousin of some degree, I don't know just what. Of course, we were so far north that it never got dark. This was very weird, and another weird thing was crashing through the ice in the nighttime. The ice would hit the side of

the ship where you were sleeping, right along the side of the ship, in a bunk; and the ice would *crash* against the side of it, and you just absolutely knew that it was gonna come right through the ship.

The first polar bear was shot at midnight. We drew straws to decide who got the first shot. Nicholas Franco got the first shot. I believe I got the second, Warren the third, and Nicholas shot the fourth bear for his girlfriend. The first one was shot at midnight, the second one at three a.m., [third] one at six a.m., and the [fourth] one at nine a.m. It was really odd; it was three hours apart on each one. It was rather pathetic shooting because the poor bear didn't have a chance. He was on the ice and the captain would simply work the ship around to get you in a position to shoot him.

The most interesting part was not the polar bear; it was being in this—right up in this ice. If there's one foot of ice above the water, there's seven feet below the water. The captain was up high enough so that he could direct by radio where the ship should turn to try and work through and around the big chunks of ice. Many times there would be no way around, so they would simply have to break a piece of ice. This was done by going full throttle until they were maybe three hundred yards from [the] edge of the ice that they were gonna break. Then they would cut the throttle; the ship would, of course, have the momentum, so it would go along and it would simply climb up on the piece of ice until the weight of the ship broke it. It was really quite a sight and quite a thrill to watch and see the way they would maneuver this around and break these huge, *gigantic* pieces of ice that were six, seven, eight-toot thick and then to see the great piles of broken ice and the huge sort of icebergs that they created. All in all, it was a very interesting trip. And coming

back, we went to Copenhagen and stopped off and saw Tivoli Gardens, and Warren came on home and I went on to India on a tiger hunt.

What became of the polar bear that you shot?

The polar bear hangs on the wall of our Lake house in the bedroom. It's a very beautiful bear. And polar bear hunting, of course, now is banned. Well, it should be because really there's no sport shooting a polar bear.

Of the four members of the tour who shot the largest bear?

I really don't remember. They were all pretty much the same size. I've got a certificate on the length of mine, but I forget just what it was now.

What did Mr. Nelson do with Ins?

He had it up at the Cal Neva Club at North Lake Tahoe for a while when that group owned the Cal Neva Club. I think a dog got to it or something and chewed part of it. He had some problem with it. I don't know whether he still has it or not, but we really had a good trip together and it was very enjoyable.

While on that subject of relationship with your fellow casino operators, how would you describe the camaraderie among the owners today? Is it good or is it fiercely competitive now? Has this feeling of camaraderie that existed between you and Warren Nelson and others in the industry—has that disappeared now?

No, I don't think so. I think John Ascuaga today has very fine association with all the leaders of the gaming industry. I know that

he knows Warren very well, and still visits with him from time to time. I am satisfied that he could call Warren and ask him any kind of a question he wanted to and vice versa, and they'd get an absolute straight answer. Naturally, you don't have association with everybody, but I know John does with practically everyone in the gaming industry—very friendly with them. They'd do most anything for him, and he'd do most anything for them, and that's the way it was when I was in business. If Warren called me and wanted any information about some employee or some person or some customer, he'd get the absolute straight answer, and I got the same straight answer from him if I called him.

With the growth of large corporate intrusion into the gaming industry, do you see this camaraderie in danger of disappearing?

No doubt it will to a certain extent because you're not going to be able to deal with a corporation the size of the MGM as well as you can with a small group like a bunch of local people that own the Cal Neva Club. It just isn't normal or natural it would be the same; it's too big an operation. So, I would imagine that gradually that would diminish to a certain extent—not completely, because they'll always have good men that are leading or operating those places, and your association will be with them, not with the corporation.

As a longtime professional and observer of the gaming industry, what do you see in the immediate future for gaming in Nevada and in the United States?

Well, that's gonna be just a little difficult to answer. For the immediate future, within the next few years, I think it's—the gaming

industry's gonna enjoy a pretty good boom. This is because of the enormous influx of European and Asian customers, particularly the Japanese, that will be coming into the United States. However, on the long pull, I have some concern about what's going to eventually happen in the gaming business. We've seen now that [in] Atlantic City, the one casino that's open is doing tremendous business, and it seems like every day in the paper you read where some new corporation is planning a sixty, seventy, eighty hundred million-dollar hotel-casino complex in Atlantic City. This means that inside of, I would guess, two to five years, Atlantic City's going to have fifteen to twenty huge Vegasstyle casino-hotel operations. Also, it's interesting to note this: I read just recently that the department of the government which is in charge of licensing and taxing of casinos in Atlantic City are at the present time meeting to decide just where to, go on their taxing of casinos. I think it's a foregone conclusion that they're going to raise the tax somewhere along the line. It's also my guess that once they get eight or ten casinos open, they'll raise the tax further. The casinos will have no guarantee whatsoever that the "take" that the state is going to take from the casinos will remain constantly the same. They're going to gradually up it and up it. So naturally, Nevada looks at this, and they're going to say, "Well, if New Jersey can do this, why can't Nevada?" So, Nevada will take a little bigger bite.

It's interesting to note that right at the present time, Great Britain—they're considering higher taxes on the casinos operating in England. They even have one proposal where they would charge, really, what amounts to a seven and a half percent, sort of surtax. This would be collected in this manner: when a customer wanted to gamble, he would go to the cashier and he would—say,

he wanted to buy a hundred dollars worth of chips—he would have to pay a hundred and seven dollars and fifty cents for his hundred dollars worth of chips. This would be a seven and a half percent surtax. It also would slow the game tremendously. It means that if he's playing "21," or Craps, and he's run outa chips, the dealer couldn't just give him more chips at the table. He'd have to go to the cashier and buy the chips. This would be very awkward. They're also considering higher licenses and various other forms of higher taxation for the casinos. Just how far this will go, I don't know, but it's a cinch that it isn't gonna be good for the gaming business, because it's gonna make it tougher and tougher for them to operate. If they do it in Great Britain, they're going to do it in Nevada just as sure as I'm sitting here. So, like everything else, it seems like taxation will eventually kill the goose that is laying the golden egg, not only for Nevada but for all areas that are operating gambling. You're gonna see other areas open in gaming. There's a possibility that Florida will eventually have gaming. There's other areas in the United States that probably will be—finally will be licensed; it's even possible that sections in California will open to legalized gaming. After all, in Gardena and several other areas in California today, they have legalized poker games. There's certainly no reason that they can't have legalized casinos in these areas. New York will surely legalize gaming in some areas.

What do you see of the intrusion of the federal government?

Well, gradually, I suppose, the federal government is going to try to more and more get some type of control in the gaming industry. I just recently read in the paper where the state of Nevada, the gaming

department had agreed to furnish a twenty-four-hour service to all casinos and to the Internal Revenue Service. This would be where, if there were a large winner on Keno, or on one of the slot machines, the gaming department could be called; a representative would come down and he would assist the casino in being sure that the winner, gave his proper name and address, so that this could be sent into the Internal Revenue and they would have a record of this win. This is an encroachment, really, on gradually making the casino be responsible for collecting the taxes for the Internal Revenue department.

Thinking the unthinkable, do you, or could you ever foresee a federal czar of gaming, someone in Washington who would oversee all gaming in this country, telling all of the casino owners what percentages to pay out?

Something like that is entirely possible when looking out to, say, ten, fifteen years from now, I suppose that they could have someone that oversaw gaming, particularly as it got into three, four, five, six different states. After all, horse racing is now in a great many states, so I suppose that they could have somebody that would oversee horse racing and gambling of all nature, like they have someone that oversees all construction, such as OSHA. There's no question but that they'll wanta get their hands into it somewhere along the line.

What are your feelings about gun control?

Well, there's certainly no question that the situation in the United States today where any Tom, Dick or Harry can have a gun, is somewhat of a dangerous situation, but if we have a gun control act, then we'll have some form of national registration. We'll

have constant federal intervention on all the rights of all individuals, and, pretty soon we'll have a complete police state. Some countries do very successfully control the possession of guns; for instance, in Japan it's extremely difficult for the individual to own or have a gun whereas, in this country, every other person probably has some form of firearms in their home.

Do you foresee a computerized form of the Black Book, whereby the federal government will issue to the casino owners the names of undesirables that live, not only in this country, but around the world?

I don't think that's possible with the federal government doing it, but I think it's very possible to be elaborated on as far as the state gaming department's concerned.

What would be your advice to the young casino owner today, someone entering the business for the first time?

I believe it would be quite simple that, number one, if he's gonna enter the casino business, he must have a lot of experience and a lot of know-how; and number two, he'd better have very adequate financial backing. These two things, of course, are most important. You find a great many people are climbing into the casino business that just simply don't have the proper experience and know-how. It's a very complicated business, and that's why you find so many smaller casinos that operate and pretty soon change hands.

We're sitting here in the family room of your Carson City home on Mountain Street, and across the street is the governor's mansion. How many governors have you personally known?

Oh, we've lived next to Governor Russell. He was here when we came. And then there was Grant Sawyer. Of course, I knew Governor Russell very well, particularly because of the children; their children and our children were all much the same age. Then next came the Laxalts. We had, of course, known the Laxalts because of the fact they were my attorneys. We knew Jackie and all the children, so there was quite a nice association there. Next came O'Callaghan, and I haven't known Governor O'Callaghan at all. I've met him, but I had no association with, him or known him, and really, right at the present time, of course, I don't spend a great deal of time in Carson, because we are either in Hawaii or at the Lake. So we're not here very much.

It really appears, right at the present time that the next governor to live next to us will be Bob List. We've known the List family, of course, since we've moved here. We've known Bob personally. He and his brother, Allen, raised corn on the ranch for the Nugget when I started the corn-on-the-cob festival every year. Allen and Bob would pick the corn at five o'clock in the morning, bring it into the Nugget and we would serve the corn in all the restaurants that day, so that it was absolutely fresh. They had a special brand of corn that they raised exclusively for the Nugget. So, it will be interesting to have the List family living next to us.

You mentioned a farm—did the List family own a farm at that time?

Yeah, they still do, out in Washoe Valley—at this end of Washoe Valley right near Lakeview Hill. They have a very beautiful farm there.

Of all of those administrations, as a personal judgment, whose administration do you think

was the most successful?— for the state of Nevada, for the gaming industry of Nevada?

Well, I'm not, going to go out on a limb on that question. That's too tough a question. 'cause each one did his part, and each one was in a different period of the growth of the gaming industry. All the governors, Governor Sawyer, Charles Russell, of course Paul Laxalt, they all grew up in Nevada. They were all sympathetic to the gaming industry and did all they could to support it, so really it was what their contribution to the gaming industry was whatever took place in their particular administration. I couldn't pick one out ahead of the other, really.

How many times have you been a guest in the governor's mansion?

Not very often, very few times.

I would describe Richard L. Graves as a modern day Renaissance man. You enjoy doing things with your hands. Your hobbies are all around you—in your Carson City home, your Lake Tahoe home, and your home in Hawaii. How would you rate them in the satisfaction they give you?

I guess I would have to say that travel has been my number one hobby. So far, I've visited a hundred and thirtyfour countries, so you can see I've been quite busy as a gypsy. In fact, Flora calls me "Gypsy Slippers." You've heard in this taping of all the various travels that we did with the motor coach home, some of my safaris. So, I've been very fortunate, very lucky from my time right out of high school or even before I got out of high school, I had a tremendous desire to travel, and see and go. Even today when I get into a new city or even a city that I've been in before, I spend hours

walking, looking, seeing, trying to uncover things that I haven't seen before. I've been extremely lucky to have been able to have done this; it helped me in my business. It's been a great deal of fun.

Then, of course, that number two, I'd have to say that woodworking was an early hobby of mine—early and then even later on in my life, I got into more woodcarving—woodworking. I took manual training in high school, and in my early years did a few pieces of work. I've always been handy with tools. I've always enjoyed working with tools; I learned this from my father, and I've done a great many things. We'll discuss that just a little later.

Actually, I really believe that *work*, probably, was one of my main hobbies. I enjoyed the business that I was in, immensely. I loved every minute of it. In fact, it actually never seemed like work. It was fun to me; there was always something new; it was an exciting, dramatic business. It was a constant carnival. There were ups and downs and numerous challenges all along and all through my life in various phases of my business. And so for many years, really, work was my main hobby. After I sold out, I got to doing more woodwork. I carved a very interesting piece out of mahogany—laminated mahogany—which is a chair; it's in the form of a hand. You actually sit in the palm of the hand. The thumb comes up and acts like an armrest and the fingers are like the back of the chair. We have it in the Carson house; it's really a very interesting piece of work.

Then at Lake Tahoe for three summers in a row, I carved a tiki, a Hawaiian tiki. These were about three feet in diameter, done from spruce logs, and thirteen, fourteen feet high. This is in addition to the part that went into the ground. These would take me generally most of the summer, and were a great relaxation

for me. I did one, a copy of one that I'd seen in Hawaii, actually, in Hana on the island of Maui. And the last one that I did was of the Easter Island head, the aku-aku head. This is an authentic copy of the huge stone statues that are found on the Easter Island. These are erected at our house at the Lake. This was full body aku-aku, not just the head.

A few years ago, I got into stained glass. I'd always been interested in stained glass. It fascinated me, this type of work, and there were no classes in Reno, so, I checked with some people over in San Francisco and found a young man who would come over, up to Lake Tahoe one summer and teach me the craft. He stayed at Lake Tahoe for a week and we worked solidly at it, for a week, and I got the basics of the stained glasswork, working with the lead came and the copper foil work which is generally in the Tiffany-style lamps. I've done a lot of pieces. I've done quite a few lamps, quite a few panels (hanging panels that hang on the windows). Of course, I did the two windows for the chapel in Saint Joseph's in Goa, India. And so stained glass, like woodcarving, you know, you can work at it for an hour or two, then drop your tools and come back to it later, so it was a relaxing type of work for me to do after I retired.

I never did play golf. I've done, of course, a great deal of big game hunting. I've been on five African safaris and three Indian safaris hunting tiger. These were tremendous experiences. They are experiences which you could not do today. Hunting is practically finished in Africa because of all the poaching that is going on. It is not because of the big game hunter. It's entirely because of the illegal poaching that has gone on often with the complete knowledge of the governments in various African countries. It's a shame because it will never be like it was when I was able to see it.

Where in Nevada could one see some of your artistry in stained glass, outside of your home, of course, or outside of the homes of your children?

Practically all of the work of my stained glass has been—either we've got it in one of our homes or we've given it away to one of the children. I don't have any collection of stained glass. I've got quite a bit of it at the Lake house, and a few pieces here in Carson, some in Hawaii. I'm going to do—I've already ordered some materials and things to be shipped to Hawaii to work on some lamps. I brought 'em over there this year—some Tiffany lamps, so actually, there's no place—I've never done enough work to have a showing or anything like that, and I don't have any desire to. I just enjoy doing this work and then giving it away to somebody.

Well, somebody told me once that some of your work can be found in a church, is that true?

I also made a piece for the church at Incline.

What church is that? That's the one that I'm thinking of.

That's Saint Francis of Assisi. The piece that I did there is called "The Bread and Fishes." It was rather interesting. I saw this idea in the floor of the cathedral in Papeete, Tahiti. It was done in terrazzo on the floor in front of the altar rail, and it showed a fish at the bottom of the design and a basket of bread. I thought that this would be nice to convert this into stained glass, so I took a picture of it, did it, and it came out very well, and then we made a frame for it and back-lighted it. And it's presently right in the front part of the altar in the church at Incline. It looks very well there and seems to fit in nicely.

Let's turn a page and look at some of the favorite things like the song from the Sound of Music, "A Few of My Favorite Things." Let's discuss them. What are your favorite things in terms of foods, countries, cities, restaurants, modes of travel?

Well, let's go into favorite cities. Let's say favorite American cities. I'd have to say San Francisco. That's almost my favorite city, worldwide. I think it's one of the most interesting cities there is. Fortunately, the downtown core of San Francisco is still held together; it hasn't completely moved out into suburbs. Downtown San Francisco is still an extremely interesting place to shop and visit. There's a great deal for the tourist to see; everything is reasonably close together, and it has to be one of the great cities of the whole world.

My favorite place to eat, favorite restaurant—that's a tough one. I hardly ever go to San Francisco that I don't eat in Original Joe's. This is a restaurant that's been down on Taylor Street down in the tenderloin district for many, many years. The cooking is done in back of the counter. It's all exhibition cooking. The waiters have been there for years and years—the same ownership is still there; they serve excellent food, large portions and do a tremendous business—have all through the years. They've one real good dish called "Joe's Special" which is hamburger which is scrambled and then mixed with spinach, onions, and eggs are scrambled into it and it's an excellent dish. I often go in there and get this particular dish when I used to get into San Francisco quite a little bit on business.

One particular favorite place is a Moroccan restaurant called the Marrakech in Honolulu. This restaurant is a couple years old. Each Christmas the last few years, our family have all come to Hawaii to be with us over the

Christmas season, and this is one of the must places that we go. The decor is excellent, very well done; the food is absolutely tops. And interestingly enough, you remember I just returned from Morocco and we never found one restaurant that came even close to the quality of food and service as this Moroccan restaurant in Honolulu. So, those would be, I guess, two of the top places.

Favorite countries—I think I've discussed before that India is one of my favorite countries. I've explained why on that. Another favorite country would be Spain and I believe I've touched on this before, because Spain had so many different civilizations. They had the Romans and they had the Moors, and there are so many different facets to the different parts of Spain, different customs, different food. There's the Basque area in the north of Spain which is entirely different from the area in the south of Spain. There are the resort areas on the various coasts of Spain that have developed into beautiful new areas. The old cities of Spain are still extremely interesting, and Spain continues to be one of the most reasonable countries to travel in.

Among the literature that you read, what is your favorite magazine, newspaper?

Well, of course we take the local paper; we take the *San Francisco Chronicle*. I enjoy the *Chronicle* very much; I think it's an excellent newspaper. I read all of the news magazines. We take a great deal number of travel magazines which I read. I think that about covers the newspapers and magazines.

How long have you been a subscriber to the National Geographic?

Oh, I've subscribed to the National Geographic, I suppose for twenty-five, thirty

years at least. I also read *Popular Science*, *Popular Mechanics*, *The New Yorker*, so I cover quite a few magazines, really.

What is there about life that makes you feel good, good immediately? Is it winning? Is it finding something? Is it meeting an old friend? That gives you that feeling of well-being?

Well, again, that's kind of a tough one. It could be answered pretty broadly, but one thing in particular that I get some satisfaction out of, and I just had an experience along this line, is in helping someone in some shape, manner or form. Recently, there was an old-time employee of the Sparks Nugget who had let liquor get the best of him. I talked to him and he said that he could handle the situation himself. He didn't have any problem, and I said, "If the time comes that you do, call me. I'd like to help you in some way."

So in a few weeks I got a telephone call from him, which I was very surprised at getting so soon, and he just came flat out and said, "Dick, I've gotta have help." So I got ahold of John and told him the story, and John made arrangements for him to, go up to Portland and take a treatment, go through a clinic up there. He's come home a brand-new man, and he told me the other day that it's changed his complete life. His family's happy and he's happy and he couldn't thank me enough for getting him straightened out, so this, I think, is probably, really, great satisfaction. Nobody knows I did this. I don't care whether anybody knows I did it. He knows it and that's really all that's important, and I know it; and it's great to see that he's really been saved because if he'd gone on just for a matter of another month or two, he would have lost his job. Somehow or other he'd listen to me while he wasn't listening to

anybody else at the Nugget. He was a very old-time employee and I knew him very well.

You have had a remarkable life up until now, and I'm sure that you're going to have a remarkable life after this oral history is packaged, but I've noticed that you have had remarkable health during this life. To what do you attribute your good health?

I really can't say—I don't smoke for one thing; I don't drink. In the last ten, twelve, fifteen years I've been very careful about my diet. I exercise regularly. I've been very fortunate in having good health. I've had no serious ailments, so I hope it continues.

What effect did that bout with the ulcer have upon you?

I think that it taught me to regulate my eating habits a little more carefully...

And it also took you off the cigarettes. You were smoking—

Yeah, I was smoking at least three packages a day, so I quit smoking then.

I've often wondered if there's a story behind that very nice ring that you wear.

[Laughs] This ring, an attorney—I should say the client of an attorney had this ring for sale. I believe, maybe it was an estate, and one day the attorney asked me if I'd be interested in buying it, and I said, "Well, if I could buy it right." So I made an offer of seven hundred dollars for it.

And he said, "Well, I'm sure that's too low, but if that's what you wanta put in, why, put it in." And it was sold to me for seven hundred dollars. This was in Idaho back before we were

married. I have no idea what it's worth today. But I've worn it ever since then.

Another question I've been intrigued to ask you, Mr. Graves, is this one: if you knew for a certainty that there was an opportunity to be reincarnated after death, who or what would you wish to be?

[Laughs] I would have to say just what I am. I've had a happy life, and I don't know how I could ask for anything more, so I think I would just have to come back as I am.

Would you agree with this description, Mr. Graves, that Richard L. Graves is basically a simple, uncomplicated person?

[Laughs] I don't know, I guess so. I lead quite an easy life. I don't try to be out in the limelight. I just enjoy doing what I wanta do and what I wanta do for my family. I don't care about any prominence or any publicity of any kind. God's been very good to me, and I've enjoyed a super good life, and I've all I want.

INTERVIEWER'S NOTE

Discovery is the passion of the traveler. To find that special place that few have yet found.

Since concluding the recordings for this oral history, Dick Graves has journeyed to the Stone Aged interior of New Guinea, floated over the vineyards of France in a balloon and cruised the Yangtze River into the depths of mainland China with his wife Flora.

Next, the Space Shuttle? It wouldn't surprise me in the least.

J.F.B. IV
October, 1980

APPENDIX: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

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October	26, 1940	Flora and I were married at Old St. Mary's in San Francisco
September	8, 1941	Richard Leroy, Jr. was born in Boise
December	25, 1942	Mary Katherine was born in Boise
	1942	Opened Pub with Lee Winn in Boise
February	1943	Opened Challenger Club in Boise
September	1943	Opened Brunswick Cafe in Twin Falls, Idaho
August	23, 1944	My brother John was killed
	1944	Bought house on Payette Lakes, McCall, Idaho
	1944	Opened Sport Shop, Buhl, Idaho
	1944	Bought Navion Airplane
	1944	Bought Waldorf Cigar Store, Nampa, Idaho
	1945	Opened Sport Shop, Kimberly, Idaho
May	10, 1945	Judith Anne born in Boise
	1945	Bought Al's Motel in Mt. Home, Idaho
	1945	Flora's sister Bonnie died and her daughter, Felisa (Beebe) came to live with us
February	20, 1947	Joanne Marie was born in Boise
	1948	Built new home on Mountain View Dr., in Boise
	1948	Opened Circle M Cafe in Garden City (Boise)
	1949	Opened Brunswick Cafe No. 1 at Sandpoint, Idaho
	1949	Opened Brunswick Cafe No. 2 in Coeur d' Alene
	1950	Opened Last Chance Cafe, Garden City (Boise)

February	1951	Opened Oregon trail Cafe in Mt. Home, Idaho
	1952	An action was filed to test the constitutionality of the Local Option Slot Law in Idaho
	1952	Opened Last Chance Cafe in Parma, Idaho
February	1952	John Ascuaga started work in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho
December	1953	Local Option Law on Slot Machines in Idaho declared Unconstitutional in Idaho
January	1954	Planned move to Nevada
February	28, 1954	Opened Nugget in Yerington, Nevada
March	4, 1954	Opened Nugget in Reno with Jim Kelly
March	11, 1954	Opened Nugget in Carson City
June	4, 1954	Purchased Gabler Bldg. next to Carson City Nugget and expanded into this space
July	5, 1954	Leased the Miller Bldg. on the other side of the Carson City Nugget and expanded into this area
July	8, 1954	Purchased 8% interest in Westerner Club, Las Vegas
August	25, 1954	Purchased house at 512 Mountain, Carson City, Nevada
September	25, 1954	Signed lease with McDonald for building at 11th and 'B' Street in Sparks and started construction of the original Sparks Nugget
January	1, 1955	Sold interest in Reno Nugget to Jim Kelly
January	14, 1955	Sold interest in Westerner Club in Las Vegas
March	17, 1955	Opened Nugget in Sparks

August	4, 1955	Happy Bill Howard goes up Flag Pole in front of the Nugget in Sparks in attempt to set world's record
February	25, 1956	Happy Bill Howard sets world's record on flag pole - 205 days
June	18, 1956	Bought and remodeled the Senator Club in Carson City
July	1, 1956	Bought drug store east of the Sparks Nugget and expanded into this area and later opened the new Round House restaurant
September	1, 1956	Sold the Carson City Nugget to Dr. Pogue and Chester Armstrong and also sold the Senator Club in Carson City
September	15, 1957	Started construction on the new Nugget on the South side of 'B' Street in Sparks
March	17, 1958	New Nugget opened on South side of 'B' Street in Sparks
August	21, 1958	Opened Trader Dick's Polynesian Restaurant in the space of the old Nugget on North side of 'B' Street in Sparks
December	1958	Received call from Treasury Dept. saying we were in violation of the U.S. Gold Act in having the Golden Rooster. However, we had a letter of permission from the Mint in San Francisco to buy the gold for the rooster. They dropped the matter.
June	6/7, 1959	First Basque Festival held at the Nugget in Sparks
February	16, 1959	Felisa Bernaola and Sam Savini married
July	1960	U.S. Treasury Department confiscated the Golden Rooster
September	30, 1960	Sold operating corporation of Nugget in Sparks to John Ascuaga

October	1960	Opened the Nugget Motor Lodge in Sparks
March	1961	Started work on expansion of Sparks Nugget to include the Circus Room
	1961	Bought Bertha
June	21, 1962	Circus Room opened
November	9, 1962	My Father died in Boise
Summer	1964	Took our Motor Coach Home that I had built [RIKAJUJO] to Africa with Flora and our 4 children for 2 1/2 months
Fall	1964	Shipped coach to Barcelona and traveled in Spain ending the trip in Seville
September 14,	1965	Mary Kay and George B. Fry married in Reno
	1965	African Safari with Jim Lathrop
	1965	Drove coach up through the north of Spain and the Basque country ending the trip in Florence, Italy
	1966	African Safari with Fred Black
	1966	Drove coach through all of East Europe returning to Amsterdam
	1967	Did Germany, Munich, Frankfurt, Luxemburg, Belgium and returned to Amsterdam
Fall	1967	Took coach through Norway, Denmark and Sweden
	1968	Drove coach from Amsterdam to New Delhi, India taking 70 days and 10,000 miles
March	8, 1968	Joanne married Ken Coveney in Wildflicker, Germany
May	11, 1968	Richard married Mary Dunn in Carson City

June	14, 1968	Polar Bear hunt out of Tromso, Norway with Warren Nelson
June	6, 1969	Judy married Stewart F. Buckingham
	1970	Toured India for 6 weeks in RIKAJUJO
	1971	Toured Japan
	1971	Sold Motor Lodge, Roomettes, Nugget Building and all real estate to John Ascuaga
Fall	1972	Toured New England for the "Fall Colors"
Fall	1973	Toured Mexico
	1974	Sold Coach
June	1976	Visited Peoples Republic of China
	1977	Traveled through Sikkim, Bhutan and Darjeeling, India
September 17,	1977	My Mother died in Boise
Fall	1978	Canal trip through France and tour of Morocco and Portugal
	1979	Visited Papua, New Guinea
Fall	1979	GREAT FRENCH BALLOON ADVENTURE WITH JUDY AND STEW
Fall	1980	Yangtzee River Trip on SS Kun Lun in China

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